IMPERIALISM

and

CHRIST

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Imperialism and Christ

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BY

FORD C. OTTMAN

Author of "The Unfolding of the Ages,"
"God's Oath," Etc.

Watchman, what of the night?
The morning cometh, and also the night.
—ISAIAH.

Serum tamen tacitis Judicium venit pedibus

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.08

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To
THE MEMORY OF
CHARLES FREDERICK WATERMAN
MY BELOVED FRIEND AND FELLOW-HELPER
IN THE GOSPEL OF CHRIST
THIS BOOK IS AFFECTIONATELY
DEDICATED

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PREFACE

My friend, Professor John Robertson, formerly minister of the City Temple of Glasgow, now prelector at the University of Minnesota, has insisted upon my writing something in the way of a preface to this book. His kindly criticism has detected and removed so many blemishes from the proof pages that I do not feel justified in disregarding this urgent and last suggestion.

The book that is thrown thoughtlessly into the lap of the traveler on the railway train is apt to be a book that bears on its pages the marks of a like carelessness in matter and manner; but such an intrusive and unsought thrust upon the thoughtful reader is inexcusable in a work that has ventured to touch upon the most momentous theme that could claim the attention of the human mind.

When John, the apocalyptic Seer, writes the sentence, "I am the Alpha and the O," not once, but thrice, and even four times—if we include Rev. 1:11, which is omitted in the last edition of Westcott and Hort—we find it difficult to believe that John, so studiously exact as was he elsewhere and everywhere else, is careless here; and we are forced also to the conviction that the spelling out of the Alpha, in contrast with the apocope, the giving only the initial letter of the Omega, is

in meaning something other and more than is contained in even the words of Bengel, who speaks of this literary phenomenon as—"Apocalypsin" and "hieroglyphin."

Two Advents of the Lord Jesus Christ are revealed in the Holy Scripture: the one gone by; the other still future. The solemn events connected with the Second are to be determined only through the exactly exegetical study of sacred Prophecy. The Alpha is past, filled up and complete: the Omega is future, unfulfilled and non-completed. The missing letters *mega*—meaning, "great"—are indicative of the great and the wonderful things that are yet to be.

This book is but the expression of an earnest desire to fill in this mystic word.

With Imperialism and Christ is bound all hope for humanity, and only through the acceptance of what Holy Scripture has revealed is it possible to relieve the unutterable loneliness of personality, and evade the black despair of philosophical pessimism.

With a painful consciousness of my book's imperfection, but with the sacred memory of earnest study in its preparation, I commit it into the hands of Jehovah our God, with the plea that He may forgive the faltering footsteps of one that longed only to run before the King!

STAMFORD, FORD C. OTTMAN.
Connecticut, August 15, 1912.

CHAPTER I

The Title to the Throne

IMPERIALISM and Christ are separate words of inseverable meaning. They hold each other in encircling grasp that cannot be unbound nor broken. Their disconnection, if this were possible, would throw out of gear, and stop the action of, the machinery of the Universe.

Imperialism—a word insistent and resonant in the political vocabulary of to-day—is, without Christ, beyond the bounds of possibility.

Christ—a word central and controlling in the theological vocabulary of the Church—is, without Imperialism, neither regnant nor real.

For the Crown Rights of Jesus the martyrs of the Scots Kirk contended, asserting Christ's sole Headship over His Church, till they, bludgeoned and harried by dragoons, lay down on the heather and dyed it with a richer hue than ever had nature given it, the red of the blood of testimony. And yet, the Crown Rights of Jesus do not include nor consist of His Headship over the Church. The Crown Rights of Jesus are substantial and literal, and they appertain to Kingship over Israel rather than to Headship over the Church.

Imperialism and Christ, in which are involved the Crown Rights of Jesus, is a phrase of concise and definite meaning: a meaning that is enshrined in the memorable and classic utterance of Andrew Melville, as he shook King James's sleeve, calling him "God's silly vassal"—and adding, "Remember, there are two kingdoms in Scotland. There is King James, whose loyal subjects we are. But there is King Jesus."

"The Crown Rights of Jesus" are words that have echoed along the years from the land of the national covenant, through the highlands, and down the glens, and over the moors of Scotland; and they are words whose meaning is now expanding from bud into bloom in the unfolding doctrine of the ever-approaching Eschatology of what we have here laid down as the "logical universe" in which our thoughts are now to move—Imperialism and Christ.

Imperialism and Christ are convertible terms, equivalent in meaning, coördinate in rank, coöperative in action. Imperialism and Christ are not twain, but One. Christ without Imperialism is featureless. Imperialism without Christ is formless. It is in this, the correlative Unity of Christ and Imperialism, that all hope for the world is inextricably bound. The negation of this statement dismisses the one and the only clue given to guide us through the perplexing maze and

mystery of the Universe. The negation of this statement, that with Christ's Imperialism the world's hope is indissolubly united, criminally drops the thread of the only exodus from the labyrinth of the great cosmic problem that presses upon the human soul for solution.

The Crown Rights of the Lord Jesus Christ are positively declared and fully defined in Revelation, and they may not be nullified by speculation nor by pseudo-exegesis, nor, indeed, by these be in the least modified. Were the Bible incoherent or were the Bible vague in its statements of Imperialism and Christ, then we might account for the prevalent misconception of, and the prejudice against, God's Plan and Purpose in the probationary Ages of the world's history. But the Bible is not vague: it is as clear as a sunbeam, as concise as a mathematical proposition: it is positive in statement, plain in meaning, and precise in application: it pledges to the Lord Jesus Christ an Absolutism that has never been consummated in a kingdom temporal, that has never been consummated in a kingdom spiritual. The real redemption of this pledge, however we may interpret its meaning, lies away in the future, and, whether it means a temporal kingdom on earth, or, whether it means a spiritual kingdom in the hearts of believers, must and can be determined by Revelation alone. Convictions,

however profound they may be, have, unless they are sustained by Scripture, neither weight nor value, nor any call at all to be standard and measure of the coming kingdom.

Christ in deity was David's Lord: in humanity He was David's Son. His exclusive and indisputable title to the throne of Israel was and is established and sealed by the genealogical tables of the authoritative records in the Gospels of Matthew and Luke, the inspired Chroniclers of His Crown Rights as Son of David and Son of man.

The legal title to David's throne, as shown by Matthew, was conveyed through Solomon to Joseph, and it was in his possession when Jesus was born of the virgin Mary, to whom Joseph was betrothed. This title, though it was legal and valid, was marred, and was without force and without effect, because it lay under the ban of a curse that had been pronounced on the direct line of succession to the throne. Of Judah's kings Coniah was of David's line the last that, before the Babylonian captivity, had a clear and incontestable right to David's throne. Zedekiah, a vassal of Nebuchadnezzar, who reigned over Judah after the deportation of Coniah, was an uncle of the captive king, and was not in the direct line of succession to the throne. Title to it remained with and was vested in Coniah of whom it was written: "Write ye this man

childless, a man that shall not prosper: for no man of his seed shall prosper, sitting upon the throne of David, and ruling any more in Judah" (Jer. 22:30).

This interdict, while it did not affect the title's legality, effectually barred the way to the throne against any and all of Coniah's descendants. Therefore evident is it, that Jesus, had He been in the direct line of succession, could not, except through a repeal of the curse that barred the way to it, have taken the throne. The curse was not repealed; nor was Jesus in the direct line of succession: yet in Him title to the throne was, without a flaw, exclusively centered and vested. Of this the evidence and proof is furnished by the genealogical records.

The genealogy recorded in the Gospel of Matthew is that of Joseph from David through the line of Solomon, which was the legal line conveying the Crown Rights. In the record of this line it is written that "Jacob begat Joseph." Joseph, therefore, was the natural son of Jacob, and from him inherited the legal title to David's throne.

The genealogy recorded in the Gospel of Luke cannot be that of Joseph from David through the line of Solomon: for it is declared to be that of Heli from David through the line of Nathan. There are of descent two lines: the one, through Solomon; and the other, through Nathan: both Solomon and

Nathan being the sons of David. Both Jacob and Heli were of David's house and lineage: the one, through descent from Solomon; the other, through descent from Nathan. In Luke's genealogical table Joseph is called "the son of Heli"; but this could not be on the ground of natural generation: he could not have been the natural son both of Jacob and of Heli.

Joseph was, as Matthew's record declares, "begotten" of Jacob,—the natural son of Jacob. But in Luke's record Joseph is called "the son" of Heli: this, therefore, must be on ground other than that of ordinary generation. There is only one other ground possible: Joseph must have married one of Heli's daughters. Through such marriage Joseph would become the son-in-law of Heli and would be called, in accordance with Hebrew custom, the son of Heli. David was Jesse's son, but, having married Saul's daughter, he is called also the son of Saul. Assuming for the moment that Mary was Heli's daughter, we can understand how, through marriage with her, Joseph would be called the son of Heli. The reconciliation of the two statements, that Joseph was "begotten" of Jacob and that he was "the son" of Heli, justifies the assumption that Mary was Heli's daughter.

But there is collateral evidence of an important kind. Jesus was, according to the

flesh, of the house and lineage of David. That fact is incontrovertible. Now our Lord's relationship to the house of David was, as His supernatural conception proves, not derived from Joseph, but was enate, on the mother's side alone. She was of David's line, and she had to be, in order that Jesus in humanity might be of that same lineage. Inasmuch as Heli was of David's line through Nathan, not through Solomon, Is it not reasonable to suppose that Mary was Heli's daughter, and therefore of David's lineage by descent through Nathan? Mary was a virgin betrothed to Joseph when the angel Gabriel announced to her the supernatural conception of a Son:—"The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee: therefore also that holy thing which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God. He shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the Highest: and the Lord God shall give unto him the throne of his father David; and he shall reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of his kingdom there shall be no end" (Luke 1:32, 33, 35).

In this promise is involved the necessity, the categorical imperative, that Jesus should have a clear and indisputable title to the throne of His father David. There must not be any insurmountable obstacle in the way to His accession. No king had legally occupied

that throne since the deportation of Coniah to Babylon; nor could any man in the direct line of descent, through which legal title was conveyed, ascend the throne so long as upon that line the ban of proscription lay unremoved. To the throne Jesus had a shadow of a claim, a primo-geniture claim, that had descended to Him through Nathan, Solomon's elder brother; but the legal title was in the hands of Joseph. To him, a direct descendant from Coniah, the title, owing to the curse, was without value, and could be but without value to any of his natural sons. Joseph, seemingly unaware of the annunciation of the angel to the virgin espoused to him, was minded, being a just man, to put her away privily; but while he thought on these things, behold, the angel of the Lord appeared unto him in a dream, saying, "Joseph, thou son of David, fear not to take unto thee Mary thy wife: for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Ghost. Then Joseph being raised from sleep did as the angel of the Lord had bidden him, and took unto him his wife."

By this marriage Jesus was constituted the adopted Son of Joseph and his legal heir. Thus, in the wisdom of God, Jesus, by natural descent, and by primo-geniture claim, and by legal right, is given title to the throne of His father David. That throne Jesus has never occupied. It was denied Him on earth, and since the ascension He has been seated

on the throne of the Father. On that throne He is to remain until His enemies are made His footstool. The Spiritual Absolutism that traditional thought awards Him is neither the precise fulfilment of prophecy, nor the equivalent or substitute of the Temporal Absolutism that has been pledged to Him by the mouth of all the holy prophets since the world began.

The rejection of Christ by the Jews, and His death at the hands of the Romans, were fore-known and fore-told. "He was taken from prison and from judgment"—so centuries before His birth it was written—"and who shall declare his generation? for he was cut off out of the land of the living: for the transgression of my people was he stricken" (Is. 53:8).

The same prophet tells us that the government was to be upon His shoulder, and that of the increase of His government and peace there should be no end, upon the throne of David, and upon His kingdom, to order it, and to establish it with judgment and with justice from henceforth even forever. This promise is confirmed by the angel's announcement to the virgin, that the Lord God should give unto Him the throne of His father David, and that He should reign over the house of Jacob forever, and that of His kingdom there should be no end.

How are such conflicting statements to be

reconciled? Dying without generation, cut off out of the land of the living: yet reigning on the throne of David, and upon his kingdom to order it, and to establish it forever? The theological casuist, who has been trained to work out the subtleties of moral questions, may convince himself that the Church of Christ is that kingdom of David promised to Jesus, but such reasoning, however subtle and specious, is, to the man that believes that the words of the Bible are to be taken at their face value, inconclusive.

If Gabriel stood alone in the declaration that Jesus should reign on David's throne there might be some reasonable question—in view of what has come to pass—as to the exact meaning of his words; but Gabriel is not alone in this testimony: the same is believed and is proclaimed by the Hebrew prophets. They predict a kingdom that is to be established in power, in the hands of Messiah, the Son of David; peace is to prevail and the earth is to be filled with the knowledge and glory of the Lord as the waters cover the sea; the house of David is to be reëstablished, and Israel, restored to divine favor, is to become the center of refreshment and blessing to all the nations of the earth; the glory of the Lord is to be revealed from Zion, and the throne of Messiah established there—such is the concurrent testimony of all the prophets.

In vain would it be to assert that the king-

dom has ever assumed such form. We know that it has not. The King was rejected and was crucified. And this also, as well as the overwhelming judgment that should fall upon Israel in consequence of this crowning sin, had been predicted by the Hebrew prophets. The children of Israel, during these long centuries unrolling since the rejection of Christ, have been, as was prophesied of them, "without king, and without prince, and without sacrifice, and without pillar, and without ephod or teraphim" (Hosea 3:4 R.V.).

This bereft people, in their wayward and weary wandering from God, have demonstrated and justified the literal application of this prophecy; and yet the prophecy, without a break, continues — "Afterward shall the children of Israel return, and seek the Lord their God, and David their king; and shall come with fear unto the Lord and to his goodness in the latter days" (Hosea 3:5).

By what principle of fair interpretation are we allowed to make a literal application of verse 4 and deny the literal force of verse 5? Is it that Israel's long banishment from God has justified the one, and has extinguished all hope of the other? If the "casting away" of Israel is a literal fact, Why should it be thought a thing incredible that God shall restore them again to His favor? And if God restores Israel, Why should it be thought a thing incredible that the kingdom

shall be set up and established in the form that the prophets predicted?

All believers in the Bible will admit that Jesus came into the world to establish a kingdom. Born King of the Jews was He, and—as the genealogical tables conclusively prove—legal Heir of David's throne He was, and is. Of the character and constitution of His kingdom a true conception cannot be weened from speculation, nor derived from any source beyond or other than from a sound rendering and strict interpretation of Scripture.

The primitive form of the kingdom, whatever modifications there may, or may not, have been made subsequently, was a kingdom here upon the earth, during the continuance of which the law should "go forth of Zion, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem" (Micah 4:2). The kingdom, according to the united testimony of the prophets, is to be set up and established here upon the earth, with Jerusalem as the capital city of the kingdom, the Messiah reigning from the throne of David over restored Israel, and through Israel extending His dominion to the ends of the earth. That is the prophet's field of vision, and there is not the shadow of an intimation that the rejection and death of the King—both fore-known and fore-told—should result in any organic change of the kingdom, or modify in any way the prophet's conception.

The form ultimate of the kingdom should be commensurate and concordant with its form primitive. Evidence of this is given by the prophet Micah, who says, "They shall smite the judge of Israel with a rod upon the cheek"—this foretells the King's rejection—"but" — the prophecy continues — "thou, Bethlehem Ephratah, though thou be little among the thousands of Judah, yet out of thee shall he come forth unto me that is to be ruler in Israel" (Micah 5:2).

In the New Testament are kept distinct the kingdom of a rejected King and that of a reigning One. The former is called the "kingdom and patience of Jesus Christ" (Rev. 1:9); the latter is called "his kingdom and glory" (II Thess. 2:12).

The kingdom of the rejected King is here and now upon the earth, the administration of the kingdom, during the King's absence, being left under the direction and control of men; and on account of this—the King being away, and the reins of administration in the hands of men—the kingdom assumes a form different from that contemplated by the prophets, and one that is foreign to the King's mind. In this form—"the kingdom and patience of Jesus"—it is to continue till, on the return of the King, it shall be purged of evil; and then, with Israel brought back into favor, the "kingdom and glory" shall be ushered in. The unfolding demonstration of

this, under the sanction of Scripture, will not depreciate the glory of the Person of our Lord Jesus Christ, in whose Absolute Sovereignty over the earth is centered—however unconscious of the truth it may be—the hope of the world.

In the genealogical table there is another feature that, because of its bearing on the present form of the kingdom, claims our attention. The genealogical record in the Gospel of Matthew declares itself to be "the book of the generation of Jesus Christ, the son of David, the son of Abraham." God's covenant with Abraham, as does His covenant with David, contemplates Christ as the One in whom the promise is to be fulfilled. God had covenanted with Abraham, saying, "In thee shall all the families of the earth be blessed" (Gen. 12:3). This promise of world-wide blessing bestowed in response to faith is redeemed in Christ (Gal. 3:16). Israel's rejection of the King, however much this might interrupt or hinder the kingdom's progress, could not stay the outflow of blessing whose beneficent tide of grace has, through the gospel of salvation, so wondrously enriched the world. But Christianity is not the Kingdom. The blessings of Christianity are the redemption of the promise that God made to Abraham: whereas the blessings of the Kingdom, when in the future established, shall be the redemption of prom-

ise made to David. The genealogy betokens the grace of the gospel as clearly as it certifies the title to the Kingdom.

Why are the names of four women inserted in this royal register of the kings of Israel? To the record no legal value accrues from the admission of these names, and their introduction is in each case an abrupt break in the straight descent. The names might be dropped without in the least impairing the title to the throne. Moreover, these four women were of a moral character that to a Jew would make them particularly obnoxious, and the inclusion of their names in the Line Royal would be reprobated as an odious reproach. But there the names are, in the most indisputable part of the record, and the fact that there they are is proof-positive of their incontestable right there to be. No Jew would have tolerated for one moment the presence of these names in the ancestral line of the Messiah if by any possible contravention they could have been challenged and stricken from the roll. Three of these women —all four of them possibly—were Gentiles; and by the incorporation of their names in the ancestral registry of the King of Israel, the Messiah and Saviour of the world, there is proclaimed, in all its wondrous sweetness, the gospel of our redemption.

Of these women three, Tamar and Rahab and Bath-sheba, were notorious for their vir-

tueless lives; and against the fourth, Ruth the Moabitess, there was leveled an express statute of the law that excluded her forever from the congregation of the Lord.

But these women should be allowed to tell their own story, and to proclaim to us in their own way the boundless grace that brought them out of their misery into eternal fellowship with the Saviour of sinners.

Tamar's sin was dark-dyed, but it was not so shameful as the pravity of Judah by whom she was seduced; yet it was none the less her sin that gave her offspring a place in the royal line of Judah. Priority of birth is given as a reason for the naming of Pharez —"a breach"; and this name foreshadows the "breach" of the covenant that should follow Judah's rejection of her glorious King. This "breach" has interrupted and delayed the blessing that is to be brought in through the direct line of Israel's kings; but, meanwhile, he whose hand was bound with a "scarlet thread" is not of God forgotten. Zarah means "rising light"; and this is the very word used by Isaiah in the third verse of the sixtieth chapter of his prophecy: "The Gentiles shall come to thy light, and kings to the brightness of thy *rising.*" In Zarah the "light" shines forth, and is immediately withdrawn, but not till the "scarlet thread" is bound upon the hand. Then the direct line of succession, that is to end in a

"breach" of the covenant, appears in Pharez; after that the true light shineth that is to light every man that cometh into the world. So at last Jew and Gentile alike find their blessing in Christ. How wondrously the names of these twin brothers bear witness to the perfection of the Word of God! The sin of Tamar brings her into the presence of, and unites her to, the Saviour of sinners. But is not this true of us all? and Tamar's story, is it not true of us all? It is the story of salvation from sin through the atoning death of Him that ever was and that ever is the Friend of sinners. So in this manner there begins to unfold to us the blessings of the Abrahamic Covenant.

The second woman whose name is recorded in the table of genealogy is Rahab. A sinner more openly shameless and lost to virtue than Tamar, Rahab lives on in her wretchedness and misery, neglected, unloved, until conscience is awakened and upon her there falls the fear of the God of Israel. But the God she dreads is a God of mercy, slow to anger, and of great compassion; and Rahab out of her sin and shame and sorrow is lifted into a place of honor, to be linked with one of the princely families of the house of Judah. Like another Hannah, but under a heavier weight of woe, yet conscious of a higher exaltation, she might sing: "He raiseth the poor out of the dust, and lifteth the

beggar from the dunghill, to set them among princes, and to make them inherit the throne of glory" (I Sam. 2:8). Her story, too, is a bar in the Song of Salvation, the New Testament telling us that "through faith" she found her justification in the sight of God. Salvation by Faith is the second bar in the Song of Redemption.

There comes next in the royal register Ruth. In her there is found no trace of the inquination that had poisoned and perverted the lives of Tamar and Rahab. Ruth dwells by the Pierian Spring, and the sweet and winsome story of how she was "recompensed" by the God of Israel, "under whose wings" she had come to trust, is told with idyllic simplicity in the pastoral poem—composed in prose—that bears her name. Gentle, timorous, verecund, Ruth is loving and lovable; yet against her was written this statute: "An Ammonite or a Moabite shall not come into the congregation of the Lord: even to their tenth generation they shall not come into the congregation of the Lord for ever" (Deut. 23:3). This law, had it been executed against her, would have excluded also David, for he was only third in succession from Ruth. But in face of the law against her she seeks and finds her place in the congregation of the Lord. Thus Ruth adds another bar to the Song of Redemption: this,—Salvation, apart from the law's requirement. We also, once

under the law's condemnation, can not we sing over our deliverance from it?

"Free from the law, oh, happy condition!
Jesus hath bled, and there is remission:
Cursed by the law, and bruised by the fall,
Grace hath redeemed us once for all!"

The last of the women in this royal register is Bathsheba, though named rather as "her that had been the wife of Urias." In this terse and suggestive sentence Bathsheba's sin is uncovered and laid bare; yet the sin of David, rather than hers, its face lifts and at us stares. David deliberately murdered Urias. That crime of hideous face has occasioned many a ribald sneer. David even while perpetrating this foul murder was a believer in God. But God is merciful, forgiving transgression, iniquity and sin; and God forgave David. In anguish of spirit, and under the intolerable weight of his guilt, David, in the fifty-first Psalm, makes his sorrowful confession, and pleads for his absolution. In the thirty-second Psalm there unwinds the tale of his long remorse. Under the scourge of his conscience he wails, until in contrition of heart, he cries, "I will confess my transgressions unto the Lord." The answer, how gracious and immediate! "And thou forgavest the iniquity of my sin." Eternal is the salvation of God, covering with the robe of righteousness the sins of the saints that stumble and fall. So there is added another

bar to Redemption's Song: A Salvation Eternal.

Such then, in verity, are the blessings of the Abrahamic Covenant, as in the Genealogy they break out into song. Salvation is from sin—Tamar: Salvation is through faith—Rahab: Salvation is apart from law—Ruth: Salvation is eternal—Bathsheba and David. Fully manifested is Christ the Son of Abraham. Whether the Son of David or the Son of Abraham His glory abides unstained.

CHAPTER II

The Child Royal

THE Prophecy of Malachi—"the Messenger of Jehovah"—precedes and antedates by an era of four centuries the Gospel of Matthew—"the Gift of Jehovah." Those years in tedious monotony and in night-like uniformity revolve until, suddenly, the light of a day, calm and serene, breaks over the heights of Zion. The time has come for the bestowal of the "Gift" predicted by the "Messenger."

In the Jewish temple at Jerusalem Zacharias, an aged priest, is burning incense before the Lord. The priest's wife is of the daughters of Aaron, and her name is Elizabeth. Both of them are righteous before God, walking in all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord blameless. And they have no child, because Elizabeth is barren, and both are advanced in years. But their names enshrine a glory that is now to be revealed.

Zacharias is—"Jehovah hath remembered"; and Elizabeth (Eli-sheba) is—"God's Oath." Jehovah has "remembered" His covenant, and His "oath" is to be no longer "barren" of accomplishment. This does Zacharias seem to have in mind when praising God for the redemption to be re-

vealed, when Jehovah would "remember" His holy covenant: the "oath" that He to Abraham did "swear." Such striking perfection in the choice of names—apart from any plea they may make for verbal inspiration—should not be passed by without observation.

Zacharias, while offering the incense, sees "the angel of the Lord"—a phrase that, literally, might be rendered, "the messenger of Jehovah"—as if Malachi had awakened from his long sleep through the centuries, and had returned to take up again the burden of his prophecy. But another than Malachi is the messenger. He is Gabriel, none the less a messenger of Jehovah, who has come to announce the birth of John, the King's forerunner. The priest, awe-struck by the sudden appearing of the angel, and incredulous of his message, demands of him a sign. The sign is given: he shall be dumb until the child is born. So, dumb must Israel remain, with her priesthood failed and her oracles silent; dumb, until Elijah, another predicted herald, comes to go before the very Lord of Glory.

John the Baptist, in the power and spirit of Elijah, is but the herald of a rejected King: Elijah is yet to come, the herald of a conquering King. Israel, by her refusal of the King, has put far from her the blessing that in the days of John the Baptist seemed

so near at hand; but God's covenant and oath abide; Elijah must come, and that coming does not seem far distant now.

The angel Gabriel, six months after his appearance and proclamation to Zacharias, returns again from heaven, but this time he takes the road to Galilee of the Gentiles, to a virgin espoused to a man named Joseph, the uncrowned king of David's fallen house. The virgin's name is Mary, or Miriam—the "exalted"—Exalted indeed to be the mother of Him that was to lift from its ruins the throne of her father's kingdom failed. To Elizabeth, as a sign, Mary is referred, and she at once arises, and makes haste to the city of Judah, where in the house of Zacharias she meets and salutes Elizabeth. At the sound of the salutation the babe of Elizabeth leaps for joy within her, and her lips break forth into a rapturous song of blessing. Thereupon the heart of Mary overflows, and in realization of the grace that has been shown her, she magnifies the name of Him that has "exalted" her to this high place among Israel's daughters. With Elizabeth she remains till John is born, and then she returns to her home in Nazareth. And here heaven lingers, and here the angels watch and wonder, while in the mystery of the virgin's womb there is woven for the Lord of Glory the vesture of His incarnation.

A hand higher than Cæsar's sets the Ro-

man world in motion to bring the virgin of Nazareth to Bethlehem where her Child, in the fulfilment of God's decree, must be born. The wish and the will of Augustus, troubled about his revenues, were not to be executed—at least not then: for "the census itself first took place when Cyrenius was governor of Syria"—some eight years later. So in the movement of empires, seemingly ruled at will by their Cæsars, there are accomplished the determinate purposes and the eternal counsels of God.

With no outward insignia of royalty was Jesus born into the world. He came into the world, and the world was made by Him, and the world knew Him not. Even Israel, after her many years of probationary training, is not ready to receive her glorious King. The earth, in its dull stupor of satiety, heart-sick and weary under its chafing burden of sin, is unconscious of the wondrous truth that God is stooping to become Incarnate; but heaven, resounding with the adoring praise of angels, is pouring its light in waves of glory over a Babe new-born in Bethlehem. Afar from Bethlehem in the oriental sky is shining a star that is claiming the attention, exciting the wonder, and challenging the wisdom of the wise. But though far away, it is the Star of Bethlehem, all non-resting in its circuit, until it comes to rest over the place where the young Child is. There, too, the magi, started

on their journey by the celestial signal, shall find their rest.

Over the plains of Bethlehem the night breaks into heaven's morning, and the shepherds watching their flocks that night are sore afraid; but they hear the clear, sweet note of the trumpet of Jubilee, "the tongues of men and of angels"—a voice of singular sweetness, telling of the love of God for a world of sinners, and the shepherds hear the voice saying:

> Fear not: for behold, I bring to you
> Good tidings of great joy
> Which shall be to all the people:
> For there hath been born to you
> To-day in the city of David
> A Saviour who is Christ, the Lord.
> And this shall be the sign to you:
> Ye shall find a babe
> Wrapped in swaddling-bands,
> And lying in a manger.

And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host, praising God and saying:

> Glory to God in the highest,
> And on earth peace, good pleasure in men.

A "babe wrapped in swaddling-bands, and lying in a manger"! Strange robe and cradle for a Child of the Blood-royal! A sign indeed! God has stooped to the lowest depth in order to lift the sinner to the highest

height. Omnipotence is appareled in weakness. The day it is when kings go forth to battle, but in the conflict impending the "battle is not to the strong." The Prince of Light is going forth against the Prince of Darkness. Goodness and evil are on the battlefield to meet. Not by omnipotence alone is the issue of the conflict to be determined. Power is not decisive: it may—and often does—accredit evil as well as good. Mere power on many a battlefield has won a victory for the wrong. In the battle now to be fought the glorious Wrestler is stripped for the conflict. Omnipotence is put far from Him. The "babe" is wrapped in "swaddling-bands." It is a "sign" that out of the mouths of babes and sucklings God hath ordained strength. It is a "sign" that good shall conquer through its own inherent goodness. It is a "sign" that hell shall be shaken to its foundation. The decisive factor is not power. If it were—and it is not—Satan would have been bound at the gates of Eden. Here is an age-long question: "Shall the axe boast itself against him that heweth therewith? or shall the saw magnify itself against him that shaketh it?" The issue of the impending conflict shall determine.

Jesus, in answer to Pilate, said: "My kingdom is not of this world: if my kingdom were of this world, then would my servants fight, that I should not be delivered to the

Jews; but now is my kingdom not from hence."

The kingdom of Christ is not to be established after the order of the kingdoms of this world, which, for their continuance and stability, depend upon armies and upon navies. Were the kingdom of Christ to be so established, His servants would have fought, and doubtless also the more than twelve legions of angels that, under His authority, would be quick to come in response to His summons, would have fought. But His kingdom is not from hence. It is neither organized nor maintained after the pattern and according to the principles that govern the empires of this world. Yet the kingdoms of this world are to become in truth the kingdom of Christ. This in the plainest terms and in the most positive manner Scripture affirms. The manner of the introduction of this kingdom is not open to human speculation, but is clearly revealed and decisively settled. When the kingdom is established its integrity shall be maintained and conserved without an army and without a navy, and yet peace shall prevail throughout the world, and the Imperialism of Christ shall be as absolute as the title that proclaims Him—KING OF KINGS AND LORD OF LORDS.

The final introduction of the kingdom in judgment and in power is not inconsistent

with what is averred here. All life is probationary, and God is dealing with us in goodness and in mercy. He coerces none. He does not, in arbitrary power, take men to heaven, nor force them into hell. To do that would be contrary to His nature, which is infinitely good; but He also is infinitely just, and for the man that rejects His mercy and despises His grace there is nothing left but judgment. The love of God was shown to the world in the gift of His Son. In lowly guise He came, and in sheer goodness and grace He is wooing and winning His followers. His blood shed for the redemption of the world is the exhausted expression of God's love for the sinner, and by a love so marvelous and so immeasurable the sinner is won to faith and salvation. The "babe wrapped in swaddling-bands" is the sign of the depth to which the Saviour must descend in order to find and to save the lost. The King of Israel might have been born in a palace, He might have gathered and have led an army to the conquest of the world, and in doing all that He might have fulfilled the expectation of the Jew; but in another direction lay His path. He is yet to have an Absolutism—spiritual and temporal—that shall doubtless exceed in glory every expectation of the Church or of Israel, and the way to that Empire He knew and followed. In Bethlehem a Child was born: there the Son was given; and the government shall

be upon His shoulder: and His name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The Mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace: of the increase of His government and peace there shall be no end, upon the throne of David, and upon his kingdom, to order it, and to establish it with judgment and with justice from henceforth even forever.

Other warriors have constituted their kingdoms "with confused noise" and with "garments rolled in blood"; but "this shall be with burning and fuel of fire." So it is written: so shall it be. And of it the "sign" is a "babe wrapped in swaddling-bands and lying in a manger."

The angels depart and do not return: the shepherds go to Bethlehem and return praising God. Joseph and Mary make preparation to take the Child to Jerusalem—there, according to the custom of the law, to present Him to the Lord.

In the temple the glory of the God incarnate floods the soul of the aged Simeon, and his lips break forth into praise. He had been divinely shown by the Holy Spirit that he should not see death until he had seen the Lord's Christ. And he came by the Spirit into the temple; and when the parents brought in the child Jesus, that they might do for Him according to the custom of the law, he took Him into his arms, and blessed God, and said:

"Now, Sovereign Lord, thou art letting
Thy servant go, according to thy word,
In peace:
For mine eyes have seen thy salvation,
Which thou hast prepared before the face
Of all the peoples:
A light for the revelation of the nations,
And the glory of thy people Israel."

Then Simeon did what perhaps he had never done in his ministry in the temple before, and what nothing can account for save the light of the Spirit that was in him—he blesses the parents, and not the Child. The Child he had in his arms, and natural would it have been, on such an occasion, to bless the Babe. But this he does not do. From this he is restrained by the Spirit of God. In Simeon's arms lay no feeble infant that he might, as others, commend to the love and care of God. In this wondrous Child he was beholding God's salvation. Salvation was not as yet accomplished, but here was the assurance of it, and the faith of Simeon, when he looked upon Him to whom the work of salvation had been committed, this little Child, did not fail. Here was the essential glory of the Person, though veiled in the feebleness of infancy, and Simeon saw it, and seen, too, was it by others that drew near by faith to behold it. Anna the prophetess, coming into the temple at the same hour, witnessed this glory: and she gave thanks to God, and spake of Him—the Child—to all them

that looked for the redemption of Jerusalem.

Such delicate and almost intuitive recognition of His deity is one of the beautiful features in the different accounts of His infancy, and the recognition bears witness to the unapproachable glory in humanity veiled. The magi "fall down and worship him": and the angel, instructing Joseph to flee from the wrath of Herod, says: "Arise, and take the young child and his mother, and flee into Egypt." Four times over there is used the same expression in which "the young child" is given precedence over His mother.

The visit of the wise men—recorded only in the Gospel of Matthew—is a distinctive feature in that narrative. Matthew writes of the King, and from his theme he never deviates. Little attention does he pay to historical sequence, and different incidents he groups in a manner that will best illustrate and emphasize the truth he presents. Of the wise men he speaks because of their witness to the King. They were men of occult science, men that had drifted far and away from all primitive revelation, and they were seeking for God in dreams and in auguries and in omens, searching the far-away heavens for the light that lay within and beyond the dim border line of the unseen. To the magi the appearance of the supernatural star had proclaimed, in some way unknown to us, the advent of a

King whom they at once set forth to find and to worship. They come to Jerusalem, the capital city of the Jewish nation, for a "King of the Jews" had the star heralded. There, though, they find no expectation of a King, and their inquiry causes but perplexity and consternation. Herod, the Idumean usurper and blood-stained tyrant, is on the throne of David, and the old Edomite hatred awakens and flames in that reprobate heart when he hears that a King has been born. Of any King born to the Jews Herod knows nothing, and to the magi he can tell nothing, but he will summon the chief priests and the scribes, and of them will he inquire. Of the King's advent the priests and the scribes are alike unconscious and ignorant, but the text of their Scripture that predicted the place of His birth they know, and this they can and do cite for Herod; but more than this they do not do: they make no move toward Bethlehem, but they remain with Herod who, with some vague apprehension of what might be—and was—impending, sends the magi forward, but with crafty instructions to return and to bring him word.

Strange that a people like the Jews, so thoroughly and so patiently taught about the coming of their King and Deliverer, so hopeless in their bondage to Rome, so eager for the salvation of Jerusalem, should have missed the way marked out for them so care-

fully; while the magi, strangers to the commonwealth of Israel, should find that way along the uncertain pathway of the sky! Textual knowledge with no heart to respond to it, is worse than groping in the dark for light. Yet these gropers may find what the others miss.

From Herod's presence the magi depart, and the star that they had seen and had lost reappears, and goes before them and leaves them not until they are in the presence of the Saviour-King. In all this there may be seen the dispensational change impending. Israel, represented by the priests and scribes, remains with Cæsar's underling, and from Cæsar's iron despotism there is no escape for Israel until the fulness of the Gentiles be come in. The Gentiles receive Him that by His brethren has been rejected, and once more the house of the Egyptian is blessed because of the presence in it of Joseph.

The magi worship "the young child," and, in recognition of the full glory of His Person, they offer their gifts of gold and frankincense and myrrh. Being warned of God in a dream that they should not return to Herod, they depart into their own country another way. Their failure to return to Jerusalem provokes Herod's wrath, and he proclaims the decree for the slaughter of the children of Bethlehem. But he is contending with a power unseen. The angel of the Lord had

warned Joseph in a dream, saying, "Arise, and take the young child and his mother, and flee into Egypt, and be thou there until I bring thee word." But this was not merely to escape danger impending from the hands of Herod; it was for the accomplishment of another purpose. He was there until the death of Herod: "that it might be fulfilled which was spoken of the Lord by the prophet, saying, Out of Egypt have I called my Son."

The prophecy of which this is declared to be the fulfilment is found in the first verse of the eleventh chapter of Hosea. Turning to this chapter and verse we are, perhaps, surprised to find that there is in it no element at all of predictive prophecy. "When Israel was a child, then I loved him, and called my son out of Egypt"—so it reads; and what follows is proof positive that of the national deliverance from Egypt the prophet is thinking. He rebukes the people for their apostasy: they had turned away from God; they had sacrificed unto Baalim, and had burned incense to graven images. The prophecy seems on the surface of it to be the simple record of historical fact, and beyond that nothing other. How, then, are we to regard the construction of these words by Matthew, who declares them to be predictive prophecy, and who finds their fulfilment in the calling of Jesus out of Egypt? It is evident that, in the application of these words to our Lord,

there must be in them a signification much deeper than would be conveyed by the natural reading of the prophet, and one to which in prophetic interpretation we are but little accustomed. Israel had been called out of Egypt, and the purpose for which that deliverance had been wrought had signally failed in the revolt of the people from God. Their insubordination and idolatry brought upon them the judgment of God, and plunged them into national ruin. No hope for them could there be save through some other intervention of God in their behalf. To remedy the ruin into which the nation had fallen, no after-thought of God was Christ. He had been promised to Abraham long before the beginning of Israel's national life. In Him, and in Him alone, could Israel be established in blessing. He was, as Paul declares, the Seed of David according to the flesh, and was "minister of the circumcision for the truth of God, to confirm the promises made unto the fathers" (Rom. 15:8). Apart from Christ there could be no national blessing for Israel. From Egyptian bondage the people had been delivered by the power of God, but against God they had turned in revolt, and through this rebellion they had forfeited their promise of blessing, and had collapsed into national disaster. But God's mercy had not failed; and Israel's sin—however long it might delay—could not invalidate the prom-

ises made to the fathers. All should be fulfilled in Christ. In Him their national life was to have a new beginning. This explains Matthew's application of Hosea's prophecy to Christ. He goes down into Egypt, where the national life had its beginning, and there He starts for them their history afresh. This new beginning is the earnest of the reconstruction of their national life that shall end in failure no more. In and through Christ Israel shall be established upon the earth, and in and through Christ the promises made to the fathers shall all be confirmed. What a wondrous significance is thus given to the words—"Out of Egypt have I called my Son"!

The next quotation is from Jeremiah, and it speaks of Rachel weeping over her dead. But in this we do not find the same precise application as in the other. The weeping of the mothers in Bethlehem over their babes was like that of Rachel in lamentation over Benoni. But Rachel is to be comforted, as is also the nation, when Benoni—the suffering Messiah—shall manifest Himself as Benjamin—the conquering Messiah. The path of suffering leads to the throne.

Herod's death is made known to Joseph by the angel of the Lord, who tells him to take the "young child" and His mother, and to return with them into the land of Israel. Joseph, hearing that another tyrant, Archelaus,

is reigning over Judea in the place of his father Herod, fears to go thither; but being divinely instructed in a dream he withdraws into the parts of Galilee, and comes and dwells in a city called Nazareth. There Jesus lived, with one recorded visit to Jerusalem, till the time of His manifestation to Israel.

Ability to interpret the silence of Scripture would doubtless enlarge our conception of the unique glory of the Person of Christ. We may at least assume that, in those years passed over in silence by Scripture, Jesus was meeting His own personal responsibility to God, ere He entered upon His public ministry and assumed responsibility for others in whose behalf He had become incarnate.

Into the mystery of His wondrous Person, truly divine and as truly human, we may not penetrate; but we know that in Him God was manifest in the flesh, and that for Jew and Gentile alike His name is Immanuel—God with us.

In the Absolute Imperialism pledged to Him in Holy Scripture is to be found that Golden Era of Peace of which the world has dreamed so long; and the eye of faith even now sees that kingdom's light dawning above the hills of time.

CHAPTER III

The First Presentation

GOD had ordained that the announcement of the kingdom and of the King should be made by John the Baptist. He first announces the kingdom, and in a manner to awaken the nation to a consciousness of the one obstacle that lay in the way of its immediate inauguration. The kingdom of heaven it is called, because it is to be set up and established by the God of heaven, as Daniel the prophet had predicted, and therefore it must be of necessity a kingdom of righteousness. For such a kingdom the nation was unprepared; and this non-preparation on the part of the people accounts for John's impassioned and trenchant call to repentance. Apart from righteousness there could be no kingdom such as the prophets contemplate; and any misapprehension of that truth will cloud the vision to the glory of the Cross by which the King must take the Throne.

In the probationary ages before Christ the moral character of the whole world had been demonstrated. The Jew, tested under law, was condemned by it, the verdict being, "There is none righteous, no, not one: there is none that understandeth, there is none that seeketh after God: they are all gone out of

the way, they are together become unprofitable; there is none that doeth good, no, not one" (Rom. 3:10-12).

Though not in the same direct relationship with God as were the Jews, the Gentiles are shown by the apostle to lie under the same condemnation: for all had sinned, Jew and Gentile alike, and had come short of the glory of God.

Such was the moral condition of mankind when John the Baptist appeared, and in the wilderness of Judea proclaimed the kingdom of heaven to be at hand. His declaration, that every valley should be exalted, and that every mountain and hill should be brought low, defined the dead level on which all men stood before God. On this ground alone, with all distinctions drawn, could they see the salvation of God. To the Pharisees and other religious leaders, steeped in self-righteousness, the message was humiliating and obnoxious, and by them was resented; but conscience-stricken sinners flocked to the weird and inexorable prophet, and were baptized in Jordan, confessing their sins. By no alternative could the way be prepared for the kingdom of heaven that was at hand. The baptism to which they submitted could not wash away the sins of which they were guilty, nor was that baptism even a sign of such cleansing: it showed rather that the people submitting to it admitted the condemnation under which

they lay, and that they were willing to take true ground before God, on which ground alone it was possible for Him to bless them. But on that ground the Pharisees and the Sadducees, the religious leaders of the nation, indignantly refuse to stand. Ignorant of the righteousness of God, they have established themselves in a righteousness of their own against which they challenge the law itself to bring in a verdict of condemnation. When, therefore, they come to John, he calls them a generation of vipers, and peremptorily demands that they tell him who had warned *them* to flee from the wrath to come? Not through any fear of impending judgment could *their* coming to John's baptism be credited. Who, then, had warned them? Or what motive had brought them? Were they trusting in Abraham's merits to save them from judgment? Then let them know that God would repudiate their preposterous and presumptuous pretension of privilege. These claims were astounding and well nigh incredible. "The common notion of the time," says Edersheim, "was that the vials of wrath were to be poured out only on the Gentiles, while they, as Abraham's children, were sure of escape—in the words of the Talmud, that the 'night' was 'only to the nations of the world, but the morning to Israel.' For no principle was more fully established in the popular conviction, than that all Israel had part in the

world to come, and this specifically because of their connection with Abraham. This appears not only from the New Testament, from Philo and Josephus, but from many Rabbinic passages. 'The merits of the fathers' is one of the commonest phrases in the mouths of the Rabbis. Abraham was represented as sitting at the gate of Gehenna, to deliver any Israelites who might have been otherwise consigned to its terrors. In fact, by their descent from Abraham, all the children of Israel were nobles, infinitely higher than any proselytes. 'What!' exclaims the Talmud, 'shall the born Israelite stand upon the earth, and the proselyte be in heaven?' In fact, the ships on the sea were preserved through the merit of Abraham; the rain descended on account of it. For his sake alone had Moses been allowed to ascend into heaven, and to receive the law; for his sake the sin of the golden calf had been forgiven; his righteousness had on many occasions been the support of Israel's cause; Daniel had been heard for the sake of Abraham; nay, his merit availed even for the wicked. In its extravagance the Midrash thus apostrophizes Abraham: 'If thy children were even (morally) dead bodies, without blood vessels or bones, thy merits would avail for them.' "

By such arrogant pretensions the self-righteous Jew sought to cover his own nakedness by draping himself in the supposed

available robes of Abraham's righteousness. Evident is it that among a people so utterly destitute of any sense or appreciation of true righteousness a kingdom such as their prophets predicted could not be established. Sin was the one and the only obstacle that lay in the path of the kingdom, and sin is an intolerable thing that cannot be ignored for one moment by a holy God. The sin was there, under the assumed robes of righteousness, and those robes had to be removed and the sin had to be exposed, and, before the kingdom could be established among them, sin had to be dealt with and to be put away, definitely, and righteously, and forever. By no pretense of righteousness could there be an escape from the judgment of God. Sin festering in the heart is more abominable than the leprous outbreak in the skin. There was no true righteousness among men when Christ came to establish a kingdom of righteousness. And, before any steps could be taken to set up the kingdom, the sin that lay in the way as an obstacle to it had to be removed. This fact accounts for the singular manner in which the King comes out of His retirement to be announced by John.

Then cometh Jesus from Galilee to Jordan unto John, to be baptized of him. To him had already come multitudes confessing their sins, and John, without discrimination, had baptized them all. John knew himself to be the

forerunner of the Messiah, but the Messiah Himself he did not know, nor could he know Him before the sign that should manifest Him had been given. Why, then, does John shrink and hesitate as Jesus comes forward for baptism? Others had been immersed in Jordan without question. Jesus is not yet known by John as the Messiah. Why, then, is John, ever before so ready, now so reluctant? Does the unique glory of the Person begin to dawn upon John? His words seem to imply as much. *I* have need to be baptized of *thee,* and comest thou to me? And Jesus answering said unto him, "Suffer it to be so now: for thus it becometh us to fulfil all righteousness." These words, to be understood, must be considered in their relation to what follows. As Jesus came up from the baptismal waters the heavens were opened unto Him, and He saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove, and lighting upon Him; and lo, a voice from heaven, saying, "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased."

This descending of the Holy Spirit was the Messiah's accrediting witness, and the sign by which John was to recognize Him. Before that sign was given, John did not know Him as the Messiah. This is evident from John's own statement. He bare record, saying, "I saw the Spirit descending from heaven like a dove, and it abode upon him: and I"—O, the humiliation of it!—"knew him not; but he

that sent me to baptize with water, the same said unto me, Upon whom thou shalt see the Spirit descending, and remaining on him, the same is he which baptizeth with the Holy Ghost. And I"—O, the glory of it!—"saw, and bare record that this is the Son of God" (John 1:32-34).

Noteworthy is it that in none of the records is Jesus introduced by John as the Son of David, the King of Israel. Our attention is at once arrested by this when we reflect that John had come to introduce the kingdom and the King. But not as a King is the Messiah introduced. On the contrary, the Father first bears witness to the supreme glory of the Person of the Messiah, and immediately thereafter John declares Him to be the Son of God. The glory of the Person is guarded: this is fundamental; and, first and foremost, Israel's Messiah is given His supreme title—the Son of God. Even as the Son of God, John does not proclaim Him, but on the day of His recognition, and on the day following, John points Him out as the "Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world." How in all this the perfection of Scripture shines forth!

Sin is in question, and sin must be disposed of, before the kingdom can be established and set up. As the suffering Messiah, Jesus is the Lamb of God: as the conquering Messiah, He is the King of Israel. John the Baptist is the

herald of the Sufferer; as Elijah is to be in a day still future the herald of the Conqueror. The Sufferer and the Conqueror are one and the same blessed Person; and, whether He as the Lamb of God is slain on the cross, or, whether He as the Lion of Judah ascends the throne, He is with a title superexceeding all other in glory, the Son of God. So John proclaims Him, and in the demonstration of His right to that title is carried also the demonstration of His right to the title of Imperialism that has been pledged to Him by the holy prophets.

Gabriel, in his annunciation, while promising the restoration of David's throne, also declares that the Saviour-King shall be called Jesus; because He shall "save his people from their sins." That was the superhuman work committed to Him, and its accomplishment was a necessary antecedent to the inauguration of the kingdom. It is this that gives definite purpose and meaning to His baptism by John in Jordan. That baptism, in its ordinary administration, was, on the part of those submitting to it, a confession of sin and of need, and it was the first step in righteousness that they were capable of taking.

Under no pressure of personal need did Jesus come to John's baptism: that was impossible, for He was the Son of God, and apart from sin; but He was none the less the

Messiah, the King of Israel, the Representative Head of His people, and as such He took their place in condemnation, assuming their sin and their guilt, and set His face toward the cross that in the expiation and removal of sin had no alternative. The Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world, is also Israel's King. By sacrifice He takes the throne. He is also declared in Scripture to be "a priest upon a throne." John's introduction of Him shows how necessary it was for Him to execute the office of the Priest before He could be crowned as King. His priesthood, differing from the Aaronic type, was to be after the order of Melchisedek. Melchisedek was a literal king, the king of Salem; but he also was a priest of the most high God. The name of this king, as well as the name of the city over which he reigned, is interpreted in Scripture, and the meaning of these names, as well as the order in which they occur, is declared to be significant. Melchisedek is—"King of righteousness": Salem is—"Peace." He was a king and a priest: a priest upon a throne. Christ is a priest after this order—a priest upon a throne; but in order to be a priest after this order, He first must be the King of righteousness; after that the King of Peace. Again we see how the cross must be endured before the throne could be taken. Christ was the King of righteousness when He hung upon

the cross: there righteousness and peace met in reconciliation. (Psa. 85:10.)

"And the work of righteousness shall be peace; and the effect of righteousness quietness and assurance for ever" (Is. 32:17).

The dove descending from heaven, and remaining on Him, was the symbol of sacrificial service. In the ceremonial cleansing of the leper, the slain and the living doves were the witnesses to death and resurrection and ascension.

The dove descending is the picture of Christ come down in sacrificial service. It is a witness of God's wisdom devising a way whereby His banished may be restored to Him. The depth to which Christ descended could not hide nor obscure His glory: to this also the dove may bear witness. "Though ye have lien among the pots, yet shall ye be as the wings of a dove covered with silver, and her feathers with yellow gold" (Psa. 68:13).

The wings covered with "silver" cannot fail to remind us of "the atonement money," the cost of our redemption; while in the feathers the gleam of "gold" betokens the divine glory of Him whose blood redeems from sin.

In ways various the voices of Scripture blend into unity of testimony to the unique glory of the Son of God, the King of Israel, the Saviour of the world. But chief in importance, superior and preëminent, is His

title—The Son of God. This is ever made foremost, as of controlling and essential consequence. Under this title He is introduced by Gabriel, and in this first presentation to the nation He is avouched by the Father, and declared by the Baptist to be the Son of God.

Whether a Babe, wrapped in swaddling-bands or lying in Simeon's arms or borne by Joseph into Egypt; or, whether a Man, submitting to baptism at the hands of John, the glory of the Person is one, undivided and indivisible, and is ever owned and ever vindicated and ever honored. In Him deity and humanity were in inseverable unity, stainless, inviolate and inviolable. The incorruptible wood of the ark lay under its covering of gold, even as the humanity of Jesus lay unsullied and unprofaned under the covering glory of His deity. His humanity, except by passing through His deity, cannot be seen, even as the wood of the ark could not be seen save by piercing its covering of gold. The two natures of Jesus, divine and human, are nowhere analyzed in Scripture: distinct are these natures, and yet are they essentially one: this in Revelation is assumed without argument; is given as a fact for acceptance, and not as a matter of investigation and discussion. He was in the world, and the world was made by Him, and the world knew Him not. The Person is the same, whether pre-

existent with God, or incarnate among men. In this, human reason reaches its boundaries, but faith leaps over the boundaries, and gleans in fields beyond the range of reason and of vision, and justifies her labors by the sheaves that she gathers. Revelation that is accepted is never in conflict with reason: only when the Revelation is refused does the conflict arise. In Revelation there are perplexities that in order to be understood may require an opening of the understanding, as in the case of the men on the road to Emmaus. Their perplexity arose from their incapacity to see the necessity of the Messiah's sufferings before there could be any possibility of restoration for Israel. The failure to discern this by interpreters of prophecy has continued to perplex the whole question of Israel's restoration. Suffering must precede glory. That was a categorical imperative for the Messiah; as also for the Church; and for Israel.

The suffering of the Messiah was unique: it was sacrificial; and this appertained to Priesthood and not to Kingship. Moreover the efficiency of His priesthood depended altogether upon the glory of His Person. This, as the epistle to the Hebrews shows, was fundamentally essential. In reading that epistle it will be observed that the dignity of the Person of Christ in Sonship is first declared and demonstrated; and then, while constantly

keeping before the mind the glory of His Person, His service in priesthood is set forth.

He did not lay hold of angels, but He laid hold of the seed of Abraham. "Wherefore in all things it behooved him to be made like unto his brethren, that he might be a merciful and faithful high priest in things pertaining to God, to make reconciliation for the sins of the people. For in that he himself hath suffered being tempted, he is able to succor them that are tempted" (Heb. 2:17, 18).

"Though he were a Son, yet learned he obedience by the things which he suffered; and, being made perfect, he became the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey him: and was saluted of God an high priest after the order of Melchisedek" (Heb. 5:8-10).

For such an high priest became us, who is holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, and made higher than the heavens; who needeth not daily, as those high priests, to offer up sacrifice, first for his own sins, and then for the people's: for this he did once, when he offered up himself" (Heb. 7:26, 27).

In this last reference the unique and wondrous character of His priesthood is flashed upon us. He is a Priest, and at the same time the sacrificial Offering; for He offered up Himself. And this is in harmony with, and explains the manner of, John's introduction to the nation of Him, as the Lamb of God,

which taketh away the sin of the world. First He is announced as the Son of God, and immediately thereafter He is proclaimed as the Lamb of sacrifice.

Godhead and manhood are in Him inseparably united, and the perfection of the one is no more to be denied than is the perfection of the other. In becoming incarnate He lost nothing of His essential glory. On the contrary He acquired glory to which He attaches His name as a memorial forever. In His glory essential He appeared to Moses, and to him communicated His name—I AM THAT I AM. But when He names Himself in His glory acquired, He says, "I am the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob"; and to this He adds: "This is my name forever, and this is my memorial to all generations." In the salvation of Abraham, and of Isaac, and of Jacob, He acquired glory that did not inhere in His glory essential. So to His acquired glory there is added glory in the salvation of other sinners.

According to the eternal counsels He came forth to battle: and in the Name He acquires, in victories won, or yet to be won, He rejoices forever; and to the name so won He attaches His memorial to all generations: and thus, at last, when He appears as the Warrior-King for the salvation of His people, He has a "name written" that no man knew save Himself alone. Is not this the name through the

redemption of sinners acquired? Who, other than He, could ever fathom the depth of meaning in a name so won?

The perfection of His redemptive work, according to the glory of that Name, is wondrously revealed in the seven titles that were His before the Incarnation. *Jehovah-jireh*—The Lord will provide [an offering]; *Jehovah-rophi*—The Lord will heal; *Jehovah-tsidkenu*—The Lord our righteousness; *Jehovah-shalom*—The Lord our peace; *Jehovah-raah*—The Lord our shepherd; *Jehovah-nissi*—The Lord our banner; *Jehovah-shammah*—The Lord is come!

Who other than He could estimate the cost at which was acquired a Name that, to all the host of the redeemed in heaven, should sustain the meaning by these titles conveyed? But the Name so acquired is His "name forever, and this is" His "memorial to all generations."

He shall be—nay, is now—called Wonderful, Counsellor, The Mighty God, The Father of Eternity, The Prince of Peace. As the Father of Eternity He brings Eternity into being, and establishes it on foundations immovable, immutable, and everlasting.

To this stupendous and superhuman service He is committed, and the glory of its accomplishment no misconception of the glory of His Person shall be allowed to stain. All things, according to the counsels of eternity,

must be put in subjection under His feet. We do not yet see all things put in subjection under Him: but we see Jesus, who for a little while was made lower than the angels for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honor; that He by the grace of God should taste death for every man.

In His first presentation to the nation He is introduced as the Son of God, and yet as the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world. Jehovah hath provided the Offering: the anti-typical Son of Abraham. Both the Cross and the Crown were in the counsels of God: and by the way of the Cross the King goes on to take the Crown.

CHAPTER IV

The Temptation

THE temptation in the wilderness follows the public proclamation of the King. He has been presented as the Son of God, and that testimony is challenged by Satan. The introduction of this mysterious Being, with no explanation of his origin or of his character, is as abrupt in the New Testament as it is in the Old, and in neither is the reality of his personality questioned. Morally evil he is, and moral evil apart from personality is nonexistent and inconceivable.

Satan means—Adversary, and he is God's adversary—as well as man's—whether in the garden of Eden or in the wilderness of Judea or wherever else upon the scene he appears. He was—when he met Jesus in the wilderness—at least four thousand years old, with all the wisdom and experience acquired in those years; but in tactics he is unchanged, and in character and conduct he is the same as in the beginning. In the garden it is—"Yea, hath God said?"; and in the wilderness it is—"If thou be the Son of God." In either case God had pronounced. Was not that enough? God also had pronounced as to Job, that there was none like him in the earth, and this statement Satan had challenged on the ground that

about Job God had made a hedge. This hedge Satan well knew, and around it had doubtless worn a beaten path. The man that dwelt behind the hedge Satan also knew; but, although Job he understands, God he does not understand: the counsels of grace are beyond him. Let the protecting hedge be removed—so Satan pleads—and it could easily be shown what manner of man Job is. So the hedge is taken down and Satan is permitted to enter the garden of Job. From a similar and previous adventure Satan seems to have learned nothing. In the garden of Eden he had stretched out his hand against Adam, and there—to his confusion—he had encountered God. Such has ever been the result of Satan's experiments. When he provoked David to number Israel, "Ornan's threshing-floor was disclosed, and the spot where mercy rejoiced against judgment became the place of the temple. When he sifted Peter as wheat, he was confounded by the prayer of Jesus, and, instead of faith failing, brethren were strengthened. And, above all, when he touched Jesus on the cross, the death there inflicted accomplished his ruin."

So with the man about whom God had cast a hedge. The hedge is taken down, and Satan, within certain limits, is permitted to afflict Job. The issue of the trial was of unspeakable blessing to the sufferer, and it must have been a surprise and a disappointment to Sa-

tan. He had not discredited God, but he had proved merely what a man, the like of whom there was not another *in the earth,* really was, when measured in the *presence of God.* But from such adventure Satan learns nothing, and he continues in the folly of gainsaying God.

When Jesus came up out of the waters of baptism God had said: "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased." This declaration Satan dares to challenge, and he assumes the right to put to the test One that has been so avouched. In the testing of Job, Satan was permitted to act within certain limits only, but here there is no restriction, and he is free to act as he will. There is not even the remnant of a hedge about the Son of God. He is alone in the wilderness, and suffers forty days of fasting before the trial begins. In contrast with Moses and Elijah, who fast forty days to meet God, Jesus fasts for forty days to meet the devil. The barren wilderness is in contrast also with the garden of Eden where the first man fell.

Jesus has come down to the lowest level of creature need, with no resource other than that within the reach of all men, with no protecting hedge about Him, in stainless humanity, with no coöperating help from His deity; and on that level, under peremptory pressure of the Spirit, in the unique glory of His manhood, He meets Satan and—defeats him!

Without this victory to its credit the whole history of humanity would be a libel on God, and the triumphant demonstration of an absolute and unconquerable rule of iniquity.

This weird conflict in the wilderness is no battle of the gods. There is no contending of forces omnipotent. In self-deception Satan may endeavor to exalt himself above all that is called God, and to such perilous path he has committed himself; but this at the last shall lead him into an immediate conflict with omnipotence, and shall result in his overwhelming and everlasting judgment. In his conflict with Jesus omnipotence does not intervene. Jesus avails Himself not of His deity. In the strength of His humanity alone the battle-royal is fought.

What a startling contrast in these two personalities! Jesus in His self-renunciation on the path of His humiliation: Satan in self-glory on the path to a coveted exaltation. They are traveling in direction opposite, and in the wilderness of Judea they meet. Jesus has come down from God, is there in fashion as a man—the royal Representative of His people, the Second Adam, the Head of a new and a redeemed humanity. This it is that makes His achievement so wonderful. In adoring praise we look upon Him as He meets and lays low one before whom all other men have fallen.

"When he had fasted forty days and forty

nights, he was afterwards an hungered. And when the tempter came to him, he said, If thou be the Son of God, command that these stones be made bread."

The need was pressing, the hunger was sinless. Why not exercise the power of His deity and command that the stones be made bread! Do not we all—and remain guiltless—draw upon our resources to minister to our necessities? What suspicion of wrong was there in this suggestion of Satan? Was not Jesus the Son of God? As such heaven and earth had united to proclaim Him. The "If thou art" of Satan was of that avouchment a daring challenge. How simple a matter to meet the challenge and prove His divine Sonship in commanding that the stones be made bread! The Son of God He was, but He was the Son of God incarnate. He had come in the way of lowliness, He had assumed humanity, He was there in manhood, and He—sin excepted—was there in all the straitness of man. He cannot, therefore, nor does He here nor does He elsewhere seek to escape from the common portion of man by drawing upon the power of His deity. He could—and He often did—use that power in behalf of others, but for Himself—never! The mob at Nazareth was held in check not by the glory of His deity but by the majesty of His manhood. In His answer to Satan He does not take the ground of Sonship, on which He had been approached; but,

on the contrary, He says: "It is written, Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God." On that ground He stands, and He will take no other. He is there in manhood, on a mission of grace and of mercy to men, and is subject to God the Father who had sent Him. No ravens have brought Him food, as they had done for Elijah in that same wilderness. No manna—such as had given occasion for the Scripture He quotes—had fallen for Him; but without it He had learned the lesson the manna was designed to teach, that man was not to live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God. To the Word written He appeals. In obedience to that Word—the Word committed to us—life is to be found and lived, if it is lived according to the mind of God. The authority of Scripture Jesus does not question. As a Revelation from God, an infallible Rule of faith and action He accepts it, and declares Himself to be under subjection to it. No will other than God's has He, and the revelation of that will He finds not in His own consciousness but in the *written word*. This Word He ever vindicated, ever honored. Some imagine that they have become wiser, but in their critical analysis of this Word they have found that from its pages the vision of Jesus has vanished. Jesus accepts the written law as an ethical stand-

ard. He pleads no exemption from its most rigorous requirement. In the fulness of time He had come forth from God, "made of a woman, made under the law": and the matchless glory of His humanity would be marred by an appeal for help to the power of His inherent deity. This appears not only in the initial testing, but also in His entire public ministry. In the hour of His utmost straitness He had authority to summon more than twelve legions of angels, but that authority He did not exercise. For drawing a sword in His defense He even rebuked Peter. If the fact of His deity be the denial of His humanity there would be neither definite purpose nor meaning in His testing in the wilderness. Satan tempts Him on the ground of His Sonship: Jesus answers—and ever answers—on the ground of His Manhood. In this we are baffled, but not more so than in everything else that concerns His blessed Person.

Far more subtle is the second attack of Satan. He himself draws—or attempts to draw—the sword of the Spirit, but he dulls its edge by the perversion of it. He is obsessed with the imagination that Jesus, if He cannot be seduced *from* the Word, may be seduced *by* It.

"Then the devil taketh him up into the holy city, and setteth him on a pinnacle of the temple, and saith unto him, If thou be the

Son of God, cast thyself down: for it is written, He shall give his angels charge concerning thee; and in their hands they shall bear thee up, lest at any time thou dash thy foot against a stone."

They are no more in the wilderness but in the city of Jerusalem, the city into which, according to the prophecy of Zechariah, He was to ride in royal state, acclaimed by the multitudes as the Messiah, the King of Israel. Son of David He was, with indefeasible right to David's throne, and for the reconstruction of David's kingdom He had come into the world.

The Psalm—the ninety-first—from which Satan quotes, was undoubtedly Messianic, and it furnished a scripture that was definite in its application to the Son of God, the King of Israel. To this scripture Satan challenges Jesus to commit Himself. Let Him cast Himself from the temple's pinnacle! God had pledged that angel hands should bear Him up. It would demonstrate in the most open and positive manner His Messianic claims, and would but honor Scripture to which He had appealed for guidance. Satan's use of the written word is a startling illustration of the manner in which it is possible to torture Scripture into a witness against itself. In his quotation Satan does but omit a few words, and this may seem to be a matter of non-importance; but it is not unimportant, and this we realize when we reflect that all false

teachers invariably seek to sustain their doctrines by inexact application or by perversion of Scripture. By the insertion or omission of a single word in a text of Scripture we may sow the seed of positive error. Satan's misquotation should warn us of the terrible consequence of twisting Scripture into a witness against the truth. In proportion to our knowledge of the whole of Scripture we shall be guarded from the danger of the misuse of any part of It. To find a suitable answer Jesus does not waver nor hesitate for a single moment. He foils the temptation by a counter-quotation: "Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God." In other words, Thou shalt not put to the test the Lord thy God.

Were Jesus to cast Himself down from the temple's pinnacle it would be a testing of the faithfulness of God: as that faithfulness had been tested in the wilderness by Israel when they tempted the Lord, saying, "Is the Lord among us, or not?" To put an end to such an insane suspicion God had riven the rock for them: and Moses, summing up the experiences and lessons of the wilderness, had warned them never again to test Jehovah as they had then done. That written warning Jesus takes as a text in defense, and He refuses to violate a positive command in order to avail Himself of God's promised protection. To cast Himself from the pinnacle of the temple might openly prove the care and

faithfulness of God: it might even commend Him as the Messiah to the wretched people in their bondage; but to do this, in the way suggested, would turn Him from that path of obedience by which alone He could redeem Israel and establish the kingdom. On that path He had placed His feet, a path of obedience, even unto death; and He alone might appropriate the words in the Psalm of the Messiah of suffering: "Lo, I come: in the volume of the book it is written of me, I delight to do thy will, O my God" (Psa. 40:7, 8).

In the glory of His personality, and in the perfection of His obedience, The Son of God, The King of Israel, stands alone.

In the third temptation Satan shifts his ground, and he makes a last and desperate attack upon the human nature of Jesus. Satan seems to realize that here is One who, however avouched as to divine Sonship, refuses to demonstrate or even assert His deity, and who will stand on no ground other than that of manhood. On this ground, then, Satan, cunning as a serpent, approaches Jesus, and offers Him the sovereignty pledged to man in the eighth Psalm.

From an exceeding high mountain Satan shows to Jesus all the kingdoms of the world, and the glory of them, saying, "All these will I give thee, if thou wilt fall down and worship me."

The ability of Satan to deliver these kingdoms has been questioned, but not by any that realize what the kingdoms of this world have become, since the first man, in aspiring to be independent of God, forfeited his sovereignty over the earth. From the free and happy service of God, man, lusting to escape, became the bondservant of Satan, and the ages before Christ are the witness to the depth of human degradation, and to the cruel despotism of Satan. When the fulness of time was come, man having demonstrated that he was without strength for self-deliverance, Christ came to be the Head of a new creation, the Last Adam, the Second Man. To Him it is that Satan offers the restoration of man's lost sovereignty—a desperate adventure indeed! To acquire these kingdoms God had become incarnate, had been born of a virgin, was the Son of David, the King of Israel, and the Ruler of the kings of the earth. Can He be persuaded to accept these kingdoms with the degrading condition that Satan's lordship remain unchallenged? This would mean the continuance—with no hope of relief—of Satan's misrule. But is sovereignty over the consolidated kingdoms of the world, in their present evil condition, a prize to be coveted by man—by any man? This, and nothing more than this, was Satan's offer to Christ. No such kingdom as this did Christ come to inherit. To Pilate He said: "My

kingdom is not of this world: if my kingdom were of this world, then would my servants fight, that I should not be delivered to the Jews: but now is my kingdom not from hence."

The kingdom of Christ is no kingdom subject—as are the kingdoms of this world—to the overlordship of Satan. These kingdoms are to become the kingdom of God and of His Christ, but Jesus will bind the strong man first: and then, taking the kingdom according to the terms of prophecy, He shall inaugurate an Imperialism that shall evoke the hallelujahs of a redeemed and a glorified humanity.

Nevertheless we dare not think that in Satan's offer there was any reduction of the full force of the temptation. Jesus was as truly the Son of man as He was the Son of God. We also are, through redemption, called the sons of God, and have become the partakers of the divine nature; but by the merest trifle we are swept often from the path of obedience. How wonderful in contrast the Man Christ Jesus!

Satan's offer may indeed seem to us like an awful insult to the divine glory veiled in humanity, but of this there is no implication in the text. On the contrary the reality of our Lord's humanity Satan seems to accept, and on that ground alone makes his appeal. Was not this Nazarene a Jew? Did not He, with many another in Israel, cherish the glowing

hope that by the Hebrew prophets had been inspired? The Jewish people were looking for an earthly kingdom of surpassing magnificence, with Mount Zion exalted, their Messiah reigning in Jerusalem with unrivaled power and glory, and before Him all other nations bowing in the dust. Such was the undying hope of the Jew: a hope that survived all changes, and that was to be gloriously realized through the Christ that was to be: and here *was* the Christ! The kingdoms that swept before His vision, one following the other in a vast moving picture, were the kingdoms that He had come to make His own. Why not take them? He could not! It would mean the perversion of His mission. He had come to die. Had Jesus yielded, the Universe would have sunk into the swirling whirlpool of an everlasting chaos. Startling is the thought that, before the tragedy of the world is ended, another shall come who will accept the offer that Jesus here refuses! And in the acceptance of such offer the Beast, in his brief but cruel reign over the earth, shall exhibit to all worlds the character of the sovereignty that Satan offered to Jesus. The obedience of Jesus to the will of His Father was the triumphant vindication of His immaculate manhood; and His peremptory dismissal of Satan marked the most decisive victory in the annals of humanity. So thought Milton: for at this point

he brings to an end his Paradise Regained.

But not so did Satan regard it. When he "had ended all the temptation, he departed from him for a season." It was but a temporary truce. The ministry of the angels shows a human need that was unrelieved by our Lord's inherent deity. Satan's hostility, save for his own recuperation, continues without abatement until he achieves—what to him seems—a final victory in the death of Jesus on the cross. Satan knew not, because he knew neither the love nor the holiness of God, that the cross was lifting Jesus to the throne. And yet the throne was not established. Nor has it been established since. Dishonored, under the accumulated dust of the centuries it lies in ruins, as it lay when its glorious King was here upon the earth. Nor will that throne be lifted from its degradation before the harvest of redemption is gathered, and the King returns to reign. This, since the ascension of Jesus, has been the hope of countless believers. Like a solitary star, this hope has been shining through the long and dreary night of the world's history, and now only, after the lapse of twenty centuries, is the light breaking above the horizon.

The Church, seeking to establish herself in the world, and denying her character as a pilgrim through it, is lapsing more and more into that profound slumber from which the

"cry at midnight" can alone awaken her. For the demonstration of this we appeal, against self-delusion and false optimism, to the testimony of One to whose authority we must all bow. Other than this there is no authority to which we *can* appeal.

The light of the kingdom—so prophecy declares—is to break first over the hills of Galilee: and Jesus, tested as to His ability to accomplish the work committed to Him, returns in the power of the Spirit to Galilee, and there begins His public ministry. He proclaims the kingdom, as before Him John the Baptist had proclaimed it, and it is inconceivable that this kingdom could be—or was intended to be—any other than that by the Hebrew prophets predicted.

The kingdom, in its institution, its constitution, and its history, is so different from the Church; it is, in fact, such an apparent retrogression from the Christianity of Paul, that we cannot, without an utter confusion of thought, regard them as either equivalent or coördinate. If the modern cry of "back to Christ" mean the elimination of Paul—and the prevailing kingdom-condition of the Church suggests as much—then we can account for the lapsed condition into which the Church has fallen.

Jesus preached the gospel of the kingdom, and not till the close of His ministry, when His rejection by the Jews was seen to be in-

evitable, did He make known His intention of the future building of the Church. The introduction of the Church prior to her divine institution is an antichronism that leads into hopeless mental confusion. The kingdom is a dispensation of sight, and not—as is Christianity—a dispensation of faith; and furthermore, the kingdom contemplates a future—and yet not final—state of the earth, when the glory of God shall be openly manifested as now it is not. This the prophets unmistakably declare, and no true nor exhaustive application of their words, other than a literal one, is at all possible.

Jesus announced the kingdom—not the Church—to be at hand; and calling into His service the fishermen of Galilee, He went about all Galilee, teaching in their synagogues, and preaching the gospel of the kingdom, casting out demons, and healing all manner of sickness among the people.

Such works of mercy were the signs that should have accredited the Messiah to Israel. But Israel was blind, blind to their Messiah's glory, blind to the moral character of the kingdom He had come to establish.

The kingdom was glorious, surpassing in glory all national hope, and Jesus, that He might open their eyes to that incomparable glory, went up into a mountain—the Scripture symbol of a human government—and there He expounded to them the righteous

principles according to which His kingdom should be instituted and governed.

That kingdom, so instituted and constituted, has not yet come, but come it shall—yea, come it will, and after the manner proclaimed by Him, who has proved His title to take the throne.

CHAPTER V

The Code of the Kingdom

THE preaching of Jesus, attested by signs and wonders, drew about Him great multitudes from Galilee, and from Decapolis —Rome's ten colonial cities—and from Jerusalem, and from Judea, and from beyond Jordan. These people were Jews, and with unyielding spirit and untiring tenacity they held to the hope that had been inspired by their prophets: they were looking for the redemption of Jerusalem, and for the exaltation of the nation under the glorious sway of their Messiah. This hope never expired. Their kingdom had been ground into the dust by the hated Gentile power, but amid the ruins of the kingdom the national hope still smouldered, and it was ready to break into flame under the least provocation. This flame had broken forth in the heroic revolt of the Maccabees and was burning in the passions of the multitudes that were thronging after Jesus.

It is almost inconceivable that these people should have misunderstood their prophets. The prophets had forced the Hebrew language into bankruptcy in their attempt to express the glory of the kingdom to be established by the Messiah. The Jews had no mis-

conception of the unparalleled power and glory of the Messiah's kingdom; but, clear as they were in this conception, they lacked the least apprehension of the manner and the spirit in which this kingdom was to be instituted and governed. The conquering Messiah of whom the nation was dreaming—of whom the orthodox Jew is dreaming still—was the only Messiah they expected, and they had no apprehension of the necessity of suffering on His part before He could act in power in their behalf. Of this even the immediate disciples of Jesus had no perception, though He had told them over and over again of the necessity of His death; but their understanding remained dark until after the resurrection.

Jesus, knowing of the passionate hope cherished by the multitudes—a hope so abundantly justified by the prophets—withdrew Himself from them; and, taking the disciples apart, He instructed them as to the character of the kingdom He had come to establish. If the disciples were slow in apprehending all this, the multitudes were still more so, and any proclamation that might be construed into a denying of the glowing expectations awakened by the prophets would have alienated at once the people whom Jesus had come to seek and to save. For entertaining the most ardent hope concerning the kingdom to be established He never rebuked them: the kingdom should exceed in glory the widest

flight of their imagination. Of this there was no misconception, and none could there be: too plainly had the prophets spoken, to be misunderstood. But the people, however justified they were in their hope, perceived not the manner in which the kingdom was to be inaugurated and sustained.

Affirmed it has been—and with great emphasis—that John the Baptist and the disciples of Jesus were "obsessed by popular misconceptions" and saturated with "delusions" concerning the restoration of the Davidic dynasty; and so positively has this been affirmed that many have come to accept the statement as final and no more open to question. But any general acceptance of this affirmation, without examination or understanding of what is involved in it, shows only how easily a people more modern than the Jews may be "obsessed" with a "popular misconception."

The Jew knew—and so also do we—that God had sworn with an oath to establish the kingdom of David forever, and to build up his throne to all generations. Deny this we cannot, without denying Scripture that asserts it. If Scripture be of no authority, we may think what we will: if it has authority, our thinking must by it be governed. Despite the covenant and oath of God, the kingdom of David was not—as the prophets had predicted, and as the disciples had expected—

restored to Israel under the Messiah. Are we to conclude from this that the national hope was a delusion, and the popular expectancy a misconception of the Messianic mission? Certainly not: and they that labor to maintain such a conclusion prove only that they are under a delusion worse than that charged against prophets, apostles and people.

The Old Testament prophets had foretold that the kingdom of the Messiah was to be introduced with a glory that every eye should see, that all opposition was to be smitten down with a rod of iron, that the law was to go forth from Zion, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem, which was to be redeemed and constituted Messiah's royal metropolis: there all nations coming to worship Him. (Is. 2, Mi. 4, Zech. 14.)

That was the concurrent testimony of the prophets; and in that testimony the national hope of the Jew found its justification. Of tremendous significance is the fact that Jesus accepted the title of Messiah, in the Person of whom was centered the hope of the nation. Baur in his historical survey of the early Christian centuries says, "Had not the Messianic Idea, the idea in which Jewish hopes had their profoundest expression, fixed itself on the Person of Jesus, and caused Him to be regarded as the Messiah, who had come for the redemption of His people, and in whom the promise to the fathers was fulfilled, the

belief in Him could never have had a power of such far-reaching influence in history."

Undoubtedly so, and it has occasioned so much mental perplexity that some have ventured to suggest that Jesus would have been "wiser" if He had "discarded a title marked by ambiguity and limitation." Prescribing a "wiser" action on the part of Jesus does not set aside the momentous fact that Jesus did openly accept the title of Messiah; and any "ambiguity" or "limitation" in that title is found nowhere in Scripture, but exists only in the imagination of those that have a present century "misconception" of the Messianic mission.

When John the Baptist proclaimed the kingdom of heaven to be at hand, he had no thought of any kingdom other than that foretold by the prophets. A kingdom of righteousness it was, and, in view of this, he called men to repentance, which, owing to their moral condition, was the first step toward righteousness that they were capable of taking. Whatever the "popular delusion" may have been, certain is it that John the Baptist had no misconception about the character of the kingdom he proclaimed. It was to be a kingdom of righteousness; and John, in pointing out Jesus as the Lamb of God, had some perception, however vague, of the suffering necessarily antecedent to the glory.

The people to whom John preached, and to

whom Jesus preached the same truth with fuller emphasis and demonstration, were under no delusion concerning the extent and glory of the Messiah's dominion; but, ignorant of the righteous character of that kingdom, and clamoring for the realization of the national hope, they rejected Him through whom alone the promises to them could be fulfilled. Had they responded in national repentance to the preaching of John, atonement, without a peradventure, would have been made for their sins, and the kingdom would have been established according to the counsels of God. This is stated decisively by Peter in his final appeal to the people, and is not therefore open to speculation. (Acts 3: 19-21.)

The national hope did not expire with the death of Jesus: for, after His resurrection and just before His ascension, the disciples ask, "Lord, wilt thou at this time restore again the kingdom to Israel?"

The preaching, both of John and of Jesus, was designed to produce a national repentance, which righteousness required, before the way could be opened to the inauguration of the kingdom. Repentance, whether of a nation or of an individual, follows only upon conviction of sin. Now death had reigned from Adam to Moses, showing that, before the law was given, sin was exacting its penalty: and the law was given to compel sin to

take the form of a positive transgression, and thus to come into open manifestation. The law was the instrument of condemnation—and *only* that; designed to convict men of sin, and thereby lead them to repentance.

Is it not an antecedent probability that Jesus, having called the people to repentance, should deliver a message that should through conviction of sin bring them to repentance?

Jesus, seeing the multitudes, their hearts joyous with Messianic expectancy, and knowing their need, preaches to them. To a nation that was under the law, Jesus the law expounds; sweeping aside their traditional interpretations, and searching their hearts, He enforces the demands of the law in such a way as to show them the terrific condemnation under which they lay. While searching their hearts He also unfolds the inner spirit and holiness of the kingdom He had come to establish among them.

The man that rashly adopts the sermon on the mount as a creed and a guide to eternal life is blind to his own moral condition, and he is under the condemnation of them that are vainly seeking for justification through the deeds of the law. We are not now discussing, nor in the least way underrating, the ethical teaching of Jesus: we are—what Paul has affirmed—merely reaffirming, that by the deeds of the law no flesh shall be justified before God. Jesus, in the sermon on the mount,

is expounding law, and of it making the most rigid application, in order to expose the desperate moral condition of the people, and to bring them in guilty before God, that upon them He might have mercy. It is of the utmost importance, in order to clearness of vision and a right understanding of the sermon on the mount, that we keep before us steadily the fact that Jesus is speaking to a people that claimed, and that indeed were, in peculiar relationship to God under the terms of the Mosaic covenant. Waiving for the moment the applicability of the ethical teaching of Jesus to all men, let us consider the sermon on the mount in its primary application. Here is a nation of legalists. The religious leaders of the nation are Pharisees, a sect that, in the guise of patriotism, had come into existence after the Babylonian captivity. They had taken up the law, under the condemnation of which they lay, neither accepting nor heeding the sentence it had pronounced against them. The terrible denunciation of these Pharisees, toward the close of our Lord's ministry, reveals their true character. The Rabbinical interpretations of the law, with endless supplementary enactments, had bound upon the shoulders of men intolerable burdens that neither the Pharisees nor anybody else could bear. Their professions were constantly contradicted by their duplicities. By their legal and tradi-

tional teaching they had reduced righteousness to a mere formal ceremonialism, and had converted the law itself into a grievous yoke of ordinances, impossible of strict observance, and, therefore, ignored. This steeped them in a self-righteousness that kept them ignorant of the righteousness of God, and they were spoken of fitly by the Lord as the "ninety and nine just persons" that needed no repentance. The law that was intended to be a ministry of condemnation was thus perverted into a measure of boasted self-righteousness. To a nation under such spiritual leadership the sermon on the mount was primarily addressed. Jesus preaches the law, stripping it of Rabbinical sophistries, and exposing the hollow mockeries and hypocrisies of a self-boasting morality. The kingdom of heaven, with its righteous requirements, was at hand, and they must—if they expected the kingdom to be established—give up their empty pretense, and take their place in repentance before God.

We emphasize the ethical teaching of Jesus, and it is proper that we should so do; but we must not forget that the ethics of the sermon on the mount are the ethics of the decalogue. The decalogue has the rigidity of a fixed code, and the fine-spun theories of the Rabbins show how an unstable and utterly false system of moral philosophy may be constructed upon it.

Jesus the decalogue interpreted as one having authority, and not as the scribes, but He introduced no new rules of ethical conduct. The wise man of old had said: "Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: Fear God, and keep his commandments: for this is the whole duty of man." Jesus in His life and in His teaching rests on that conclusion, and goes no further. Than the revealed will of God there could be no standard higher. Jesus, in another way, sums it up, saying, "Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect." This, as a condition of salvation, is to sinful men impossible; and this we do well to remember when we advocate any extended application of the principles of the sermon on the mount. On the other hand, in restricting these principles to a primary application, we must guard against antinomianism. In the sermon on the mount Jesus affirms the perpetuity and binding obligation of the law. He says that not one jot—the smallest letter in the Hebrew alphabet—nor one tittle—the projecting point of a letter—shall pass from the law, till all be fulfilled: and the context shows that He is not speaking of the decalogue merely, but of "the law and the prophets"—an expression commonly used to designate the whole of the Old Testament. Every jot and every tittle of the Old Testament remains, and is never to pass away. It is God's

own Revelation of Himself, and of His counsels, and it is, therefore, stable. Through all dispensations the law abides unchangeable, and its perpetual and binding authority is in the most solemn way confirmed. But this does not mean, and it could not mean except by contradiction of Scripture, that the believer in Christ is under the law. Christianity and Judaism are not the same: they are as wide apart as the east is from the west, and they are as distinct from each other as is grace from law. The law's relation to the believer in Christ is carefully and exhaustively argued out in the epistles. In these epistles we find that the righteousness—the righteous requirement—of the law is fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit. The standard of righteousness remains, and, throughout all generations, remains unchanged and flawless. But even this does not mean that the Christian is under the law. From it he has been delivered, and to it he is dead. Christ has died, and with Him the believer is reckoned dead: he is, therefore, dead to the law, and freed from its condemnation. The believer's portion is in Christ before God, and in the power of the indwelling Spirit he is exhorted to walk as Christ walked.

"For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and

for sin, condemned sin in the flesh: that the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit" (Rom. 8:3, 4).

The *law* was not weak, but *we* were—unable to meet its righteous demands; and, because we were weak and beyond all power of self-recovery, God in mercy and in grace sent His Son to expiate our sins, and deliver us from the law's condemnation. The "law of the Spirit" is "life in Christ Jesus": and life in Christ Jesus, apprehended by faith and lived in the power of the indwelling Spirit, sets us free from the law of sin and death, and works out in us the righteousness that the law requires. This is the believer's relation to law: the differentiation of grace and legalism.

Such doctrine is not taught in the sermon on the mount, but it is taught in the epistles; and any extended application of the principles of the sermon on the mount, without attention being given to the doctrine of the epistles, would be perversion and misapplication. In the sermon on the mount Jesus is addressing Himself to Jews, a people living under the law, as we are not, and He is addressing them in view of the kingdom that He has already announced to be at hand. This kingdom was to be a kingdom of righteousness, and Jesus unfolds its inner spirit and holiness, that the people might see, in con-

trast with their own self-righteousness, the righteousness of God. The aim of Jesus was to bring men to repentance, to break through the hollow crust of their boasted morality, and expose to them the reality of their condition when in the presence of God they were measured by the unchangeable standard that He had given to them on Mount Sinai. The law has no purpose other than this, to search men out, and to bring them in guilty before God. It is a ministry of condemnation, and it was never intended to be a ministry of anything other than this. The law, says the apostle, was our schoolmaster to bring us to Christ: it was designed to teach us our need of Him: it could do no more. Just as the Greek pedagogue trained his scholars till they were fitted for the school of the philosopher: so the law trains us till we are ready to enter the school of Christ, and to learn of Him the wisdom of God in redemptive counsels.

The nation of legalists to which Jesus came refused to accept the sentence of condemnation against them. They rejected the King, and in rejecting Him they lost the kingdom that He had come to establish among them. But this does not mean, nor does it imply, that all thought of the kingdom has been given up. The kingdom is yet to be.

The Church is not the kingdom and has no

commission to bring in the kingdom. Christ is not spoken of in Scripture as the King of the Church. He is the Head of the Church, which is His body, the fulness of Him that filleth all in all; and, in the counsels of God, the Church is destined to an exaltation in glory to which no subject of the kingdom ever shall be raised.

Israel is the inheritor of the earth: the Church is the inheritor of heaven. This distinction is no indifferent one, but it is one that is vital to any true understanding of the dispensational teaching of Scripture.

The Church is the Bride waiting here upon the earth for the coming of the Bridegroom. The cry at midnight shall summon her into the presence of her Lord and Master: then darkness shall cover the earth, and gross darkness the people. Over that chaos, like a morning without clouds, the light of His kingdom shall break. His shall be a kingdom such as earth has never seen its like. Instituted and governed according to the principles enunciated by Him in the sermon on the mount, this kingdom shall be established in righteousness: and for those subject to its King there shall be no Mount Ebal, as under the first covenant, when the curses were thundered from that mountain in response to the blessings that were uttered on Gerizim; no curse, no woe—the lips of the glorious King giving utterance only to the blessings that

are to be the abiding inheritance of His people.

The kingdom and glory it is to be, and to be established here upon the earth among men, and to be set up and established according to the majestic conception of the prophets who predicted it; and, in the constitution and government of this kingdom of glory, the sermon on the mount, as the code and governing principle of it, is to find its last and perfected expression.

CHAPTER VI

Credentials

ACCREDITED the King must be. He, having unfolded the righteous character of the kingdom that He had come to establish, gives the signs that should have demonstrated—and did demonstrate—His Messianic claims. These signs, marvelous though they were, did not dispel doubt and establish conviction in the minds of the people: on the one hand the signs were viewed with suspicion, and on the other with wondering and stupid credulity. Suspicion of God is difficult to allay. The supernatural is viewed with distrust. They that do not question stare stupidly at it, apparently unconscious of its being significant of anything. The claims of Christ were upon the people of His own time insistent and imperial, and have been so upon the people of every generation since, and are now. It is not to be wondered at—man being what he is—that the evidence sustaining these claims should be subjected to the most rigid scrutiny. The wonders done by the Lord Jesus, though—because of what He was—flowing from Him naturally, were none the less signs that were given by Him to accredit His Messianic claims. The arbitrary elimination of the wonder-elements is a peremp-

tory and unjustifiable dismissal of these witnesses, and the ruling of them out of court, without a hearing, is an *a priori* denial of the value of their testimony. No less reprehensible is it to admit these witnesses, and then, through a denial of their supernatural character, endeavor to break the force of their testimony. These signs, apart from the supernatural, would be significant of nothing —save juggling, and to this perilous position the deniers of the supernatural are driven.

Christ was the Son of David, but He was much more than that: He was the Son of Abraham, the Son of man, and the Son of God; each of these titles conveying its own inheritance and peculiar dignity. He is first of all, and above all, the Son of God. This the angel of the annunciation declared in the confirmation of His virgin birth, and at His baptism did earth and heaven unite to proclaim Him in this unique character. The signs and wonders by Him done, while proving Him to be Israel's Messiah, go far beyond that, and demonstrate also that He is the Son of God. The disproving of His deity—if such disproof were possible—would disprove all other claims; bereave humanity of its God, and leave it a breathing corpse tossing along on the waves of a shoreless ocean, looked down upon from above by an eyeless socket!

The signs that manifest Israel's King are not merely Jewish and local; but, while they

fully attest His Messianic claims, they also manifest Him in the full glory of His Person. The signs themselves must be judged by their fitness to accomplish the purposes for which they were given. Their order—as recorded in Matthew's Gospel—is not chronological, and this in itself is significant, showing that the Evangelist is grouping them in such a manner as will best accredit and set forth with the utmost distinctness the King of Israel, who is also the Son of God.

The first four signs are miracles of healing, which, when taken together, present a dispensational picture that would arrest the attention at once, except for the deplorable fact that dispensational teaching of Scripture is so commonly unknown or ignored.

First, the cleansing of the leper is given; then the healing of the centurion's servant; third, the restoration of Peter's wife's mother, and this is followed by the scene at "evening time" when demon-possessed men are delivered, and all manner of diseases healed; attention being called to this as a fulfilment of the prophet's vision of the blessings that were to follow the kingdom's inauguration. These are dispensational features that ought not to pass unobserved.

The cleansing of the leper is the picture of Christ's personal ministry on earth: of that

ministry Israel being the peculiar and special object.

The healing of the centurion's servant betokens the grace that is now going out to the Gentiles, while Israel is under judgment, in blindness and unbelief: the Lord absent from the earth, and healing from a distance.

The restoration of Peter's wife's mother looks on, dispensationally, to a time still future when the Lord, once more upon the earth, shall quiet the fever of Israel's long unrest, and bring that nation in relationship again with Himself.

The scene at evening time is a picture and a prophecy of the blessings of the Kingdom-Age: forever lifted shall the burden of sin and sickness and sorrow be, and over all the earth the Lord shall be King.

These works of healing, portraying as they do the dispensations, are signs also, accrediting the Messiah, establishing the full glory of His character and of His claims.

The cleansing of the leper is the witness to the divine Sonship. This sign is given first: for the fact of His deity is the very foundation on which His character and claims rest. The cure of leprosy was unknown in Israel, save through divine intervention, and the Lord, healing with a touch that would to another have meant defilement, sends the leper unto the priests: for a *testimony* unto them. A testimony it was to His deity, to divine

power at work upon the earth, and designed to be that to the priests, the spiritual leaders of the people; but from these leaders there is no response. Response there should have been; for the unique glory of the Person of the Messiah the Hebrew prophets had foretold in terms that implied His deity; but when in this character Jesus manifests Himself, He is met in sullen silence at the first, and this later breaks into open and violent opposition. On the charge of blasphemy, in claiming to be the Son of God, He was finally condemned by the ecclesiastical court.

In the healing of the centurion's servant, Jesus manifests Himself as the Son of Abraham, the promised Seed in which all the families of the earth were to find their blessing: and in His grace going out thus to the Gentiles there was given—little heeded by the Jew—a Messianic sign, that God was the God of the Gentiles also. Greater than faith found in Israel the faith of the centurion is declared to be, and this declaration was in itself a warning of the dispensational change impending. Of the day of her visitation Israel knew not, and she, rejecting her glorious King, has been delivered over to the restless fever that within her has burned ever since, and from that raging fever there can be no relief nor release before the King's return. But more than blessing for Israel is brought in by the King's return: it means the

establishment of the kingdom, the bestowal of long predicted blessings, the banishment of sin and of sorrow, of disease and of death; it means that the knowledge and glory of the Lord shall cover the earth as the waters cover the sea: it is the wondrous evening time that brightens into everlasting light.

Of another character are the signs that follow, revealing the unique Imperialism of the King of Israel, the Son of God. The Evangelist again discards historical sequence and groups together other four signs that demonstrate an absolute sovereignty that, save the Son of God, no one could either claim or sustain.

The first sign is that of sovereignty over circumstance. The King of Israel is the Son of God, holding in supreme control conditions that are incidental to the humiliation of manhood. The foxes had holes, and the birds of the air had nests, whilst the Son of man had not where to lay His head. But the poverty of His condition did not impair His glory: that glory it only the more manifested —as the night brings out the stars. Not governed was He—as so constantly are we—by circumstances; but, forcing them to show the resources that were His, He was of them independent, and over them supreme. His repudiation of the pressure of circumstances was put forth on the one hand as a challenge to faith: on the other, as a summons to in-

stant obedience. Sovereign must He be in the day of His humiliation as well as in the day of His glory.

The stilling of the tempest is the next sign, and it demonstrates the King's lordship over Nature. Natural law's inexorable reign, of which man makes so much, and wherein he finds his limitation, was subject to the will of Jesus. He was above natural law, its operation suspending when He so willed to do, and forcing it to pay tribute to the glory of His Person. The Framer He was of the laws that direct and govern the forces of the universe. These forces, regal and terrific, with the power of autonomous administration, serving those that obey them, and out of their path sweeping whomsoever and whatsoever opposes them, are but the witnesses to the power and wisdom of Him that framed them. Is it conceivable that He, the Maker and Mover of these forces, had, in becoming subject to them, tied His own hands? Revoke them He could and He did, and their action did He at will suspend, and this did He without there being one jar or jolt of cosmic disturbance, neither one note of discord in the music of the spheres. When over the sea the tempest was sweeping, and into the disciples' faces the spray was spitting, He has but the word to speak, and the winds and the waves are still. Even such a demonstration of unique Imperialism, controlling and ordering

the very forces of Nature, makes upon His disciples no deep impression. Marvel only do they, saying, What manner of man is this, that even the winds and the sea obey him! A more incredulous age finds it easier to strike from the record the miraculous, leaving the wind to blow where it listeth; while man, in the folly of his wisdom, is able only to hear the sound thereof, and cannot tell whence it cometh nor whither it goeth. The reign of blind, impersonal force, with no governing God above and beyond it, is unthinkable to all intelligences save man, who under the tyranny of sin would change the truth of God into a lie, and worship and serve the creature more than the Creator, who is blessed forever. The Creator of the ends of the earth was Christ. Need did He not, as does mere man, to adjust Himself to the laws of the universe, but sovereign over them was He, subjecting them to His will, and ordering them into the execution of His purpose. The denial of His power transcending natural law is the denial of the testimony that Nature repeatedly gave to His deity. Lord He is of Nature, and in her instant obedience to His word Nature owns and crowns Him Lord of all.

The next sign demonstrates the King's sovereignty in the realms of the spiritual. Across the sea, in the country of the Gergesenes, He finds the enemy entrenched against

Him. To meet Him there come out two men. These men, dwelling in the tombs and possessed with demons, hitherto had barred the way to all other comers. In the light of Scripture it would be folly to deny the personality and power and malignant wickedness of these unclean spirits. Nor by such denial is there anything to be gained. The condition in which Jesus finds these miserable men shows the supernatural power of evil that enthralled them. Powerless had chains and fetters been to bind them, and always they were in the mountains, and in the tombs, crying, and cutting themselves with stones, night and day. Other men in terror had fled before them, but they are now to meet One that neither fears nor flees. To the dignity of His Person these spirits, unclean though they be, are not blind. Man, whether in real ignorance or in supposed wisdom, may dispute His dignity: but unclean spirits—never! They know better. Seeing Jesus, they cry out, saying, "What have we to do with thee, Jesus, thou Son of God? art thou come hither to torment us before the time?" In the presence of Jesus they quail; acknowledging His deity, and bowing to His authority, they plead exemption from punishment immediate, and beg permission to enter a herd of swine. This, with an imperial word of command, Jesus allows: and the swine—two thousand in number—leap

from the cliffs and are drowned in the sea. Sovereign is Christ in the realm of spiritual evil: but the men—from whose necks the yoke of its galling tyranny He would have stricken—deprecating the loss of their swine, beseech Him to depart out of their coasts. Vain is it to work signs where men deliberately close their eyes to the light of His glory. Jesus their dismissal accepts, and across the sea to His own city returns.

The miracle that follows is a sign manifesting the King's sovereignty over sin. Into His presence a man stricken with the palsy is brought, and Jesus, with an imperialism that no man hitherto had ventured to assume or assert, to the sick of the palsy said: "Son, be of good cheer; thy sins be forgiven thee." The blessed Speaker is by the scribes, reasoning within themselves, charged with blasphemy, on the ground that none can forgive sins, but God alone. But their reasoning Jesus in omniscient wisdom knows, and He asks quietly, Whether is it easier to say, Thy sins be forgiven thee; or to say, Arise, and take up thy bed, and walk? The answer, though for it He did not wait, is simple enough. Easier would it be to say, Thy sins be forgiven thee. That might any one say, and the reality of the absolution leave unconfirmed. Quite another thing is it to say to a palsied man, Arise, and take up thy bed, and walk. Here is something whose reality

could be proved by ocular demonstration, as the other could not. For the challenge Jesus does not wait, but meets the issue at once, saying, That ye may know that the Son of man—a Messianic title—hath power on earth to forgive sins (then saith He to the sick of the palsy), Arise, take up thy bed, and go unto thine house. Immediately the man arose, took up that whereon he lay, and entered into his own house. This miracle, attesting Jesus as the Son of man having power on earth to forgive sins, defines a mission that cannot be limited to Israel alone. King of Israel He is: yet more than this; and when Israel, with a faith like that of Nathanael, shall own Him as the Son of God as well as the King of Israel, they shall see heaven opened, and the angels ascending and descending upon the *Son of man.*

As the Son of man He takes the kingdom, and Matthew, who writes of the kingdom, tells of the manner in which the kingdom is to be ushered in. Matthew, in fact, records —as following the healing of the palsied man—his own call, and he makes a feast, there inviting sinners to meet Jesus who had thus declared Himself to be the Saviour of sinners. This arouses the indignation of the Pharisees, to whom Jesus reveals the inefficiency of the legal system to accomplish salvation. Vain would it be to attempt to patch up the old garment of legal righteous-

ness with the new cloth of evangelical righteousness: only would the rent be made worse. Neither could the free and expansive spirit of the new evangel be confined in the old wineskins of ceremonial Judaism: the bottles would burst under the pressure; it would be but the strife of contradictory principles. The new wine must be put into new bottles, and so both should be preserved. Israel under the legal system was dead, and to quicken them He had come. Of this we are given a picture in the next two incidents recorded by the Evangelist. And in these we are again reminded of the dispensational change impending.

The daughter of a ruler of the synagogue has just died, but the ruler has faith to believe that if Jesus were only to come and lay His hand upon her, she would live again. In answer to the ruler's plea Jesus arises, and with the definite purpose of raising the child to life begins His journey; but, while on the way, the woman with the issue of blood claims His attention, and by her faith she is healed. Once more, in principle, we see the faith of the Gentile reaching out to Him for salvation while Israel's blessing is in abeyance.

When Jesus arrives at the ruler's house He finds it filled with the hired mourners, who are making a great noise, and who, when He quietly assures them that the child is not

dead, but sleeping only, deride Him. But, the unbelieving crowd being put forth out of the house, Jesus takes the child by the hand, saying,—in His own gentle Aramaic—Taleitha Koum!—an imperial voice though softened now to reach the sleeping child—and immediately the maid arose and walked.

So at last shall Israel hear His voice, softly, and from the death-sleep of the centuries they shall waken, and rise again to national life.

This last miracle of power completes the signs that manifest the King. First and last He is seen to be the Son of God: the cleansing of the leper witnessing to this at the beginning; the raising of the ruler's daughter reaffirming it at the end; and in this last He is shown to be no human King merely, but One that is "marked out Son of God with power, according to the Spirit of holiness, by resurrection of the dead" (Rom. 1:4). The glory of this title transfigures all others. He is the Son of God—with all that this implies of blessing—to the whole world. He is the Son of David, to bring in the kingdom, according to the covenant that God has made with David. He is the Son of Abraham, ministering blessing to the Gentiles, while Israel remains in the darkness of judicial blindness. He is the Son of man, to return in glory, and to free the earth from its burden of sorrow.

He is Master of all earthly circumstances; the Lord of Nature; the Sovereign Ruler of demons; and, with matchless power to absolve the sinner from his sins, He is the Son of man.

While on His way to raise Israel to life and to national reconstruction, there is in Him virtue to heal the Gentiles that have faith enough—as He moves through the generations toward the consummation of His glorious mission—to touch but the hem of His garment.

To the superhuman task that He has undertaken He is equal. His mission none should attempt to interpret save in the light of the full glory of His Person. The Son He is, and of the Son is it written: "Thy throne, O God, is forever and ever: a scepter of righteousness is the scepter of thy kingdom" (Heb. 1:8). The forty-fifth Psalm, which is quoted and applied in this way, is a Psalm of the King, predicting the coming of the King in glory, declaring the dignity of His Person, defining the righteous character of His government, and certifying the Absolutism of His reign. We, with our sins draining away the sources of our life, are feeble in our apprehension of His majesty and His glory, but unspeakably blessed are we, if in the throng that presses upon Him as He moves through the ages, His garment we may touch, and be healed. Crowned in the counsels of God, the

yet uncrowned King goes on to the day of His Coronation.

As the Son of Abraham He is now fulfilling the covenant that God made with Abraham, and all the families of the earth may, if they will, on the principle of faith, find their blessing in Him.

As the Son of David He has in the character of His Melchisedek priesthood passed through the heavens, and unto them that wait for him, at the end of Israel's long Day of Atonement, He shall appear the second time, without sin unto salvation.

As the Son of man He shall come in His glory, with all the holy angels with Him, and He shall sit then upon the throne of His glory, and all nations shall be subject to Him, and His Imperialism shall be exercised, and by all men shall be owned unto the ends of the earth.

As the Son of God He is the Heir of all things, to deliver up all to the Father, that God may be all in all.

Into this world He came accredited by God the Father, and upon the fulfilment of the pledges that guarantee His title to be King of kings and Lord of lords rests for its realization all hope for the world.

The Church, in undertaking to bring in the kingdom, is attempting the, to her, impossible task of raising the daughter of Jairus, and in the attempt to do this the Church is

usurping the function of the King by whose grace she has been healed. During the King's absence the Church's mission is to evangelize the world, and other than that she has no commission; and every effort to bring in kingdom conditions, while the King is absent, must of necessity prove abortive. An ethical, sociological, or humanitarian gospel may be helpful temporarily, but it cannot heal the open sore of the world. The social problem has baffled the combined wisdom of the world, because reformation has been aimed at rather than regeneration; and the Church also will fail if she follows in the course of the world's wisdom. The world's one need is regeneration, and this is to be wrought in the individual, through the grace of the Holy Spirit, and to this propaganda the Church is committed, and to no other. The kingdom pledged to Jesus is secured to Him in the counsels of God, and the signs that have so long accredited the King not only demonstrate the supreme glory of His Person, but they are abundantly sufficient to confirm our faith in His ability to bring in the kingdom in His own time, and in His own way, and in all the glory that has been spoken by the mouth of all the holy prophets since the world began.

CHAPTER VII

The Royal Messengers

THE King of Israel has manifested His dignity and His glory. He now sends forth His messengers to proclaim Him throughout the length and breadth of the land. Prior to this time the Lord had not taken openly the title of King, and only by the magi and by Nathanael had He in this character been owned. Fundamental to all others was His supreme title, and therefore, first of all, He is introduced to the nation as the Son of God. Gabriel's annunciation had been confirmed by the Father, and John the Baptist, witnessing the descending Spirit, saw and bare record that He was the Son of God. Of supreme importance was and is the divine Sonship, and apart from it the title of Son of David in its application to Him would have conveyed no more of signification than in its application to Joseph, or to any other man of David's line. For this reason Christ must be known as the Son of God before He may be known intelligently as the Son of David. As the Son of God the Jews rejected Him, thereby losing the kingdom that He as the Son of David had come to introduce: when they, awakened to the consciousness of His true glory, shall own Him—as did Na-

thanael, saying, Rabbi, thou art the Son of God; thou art the King of Israel, they shall have the kingdom restored to them. The kingdom is not Israel's kingdom merely; it is the kingdom of the Son of God, and not till He has manifested Himself as the Son of God does He answer any appeal that is made to Him as the Son of David.

He leaves the ruler's house, where the dead child had been raised to life, and two blind men follow Him, crying out and saying, Thou Son of David, have mercy on us. Jesus, accepting the title, proves to it His right by restoring sight to the blind men, but He charges them to let no man know it. Such precaution was doubtless needful in order to restrain the passionate Messianic hope, which under such stimulus was liable to break into flame of political revolution. The men whose sight had been restored, disregarding the prohibition, spread abroad His fame through all the land. The dire consequence of such notoriety in its effect upon the Jewish nation is indicated in the miracle next done by the Lord Jesus.

Into His presence is brought a dumb demoniac, and, the demon being cast out, the dumbness is gone—the man speaks! Dumb has Israel been stricken, because of the rejection of her glorious King, and she shall speak no more until dispossessed of the demon that has so long, and does still, enslave her. The

miracle provokes the wrath of the Pharisees, who in their deliberate accusation resist the Holy Spirit, and harden themselves against God. Nevertheless, whether the nation as a whole would submit to such blind and unspiritual leadership must be demonstrated; and Jesus—moved with compassion for the multitudes, which were harassed and scattered like sheep without a shepherd—went about all Galilee, preaching the gospel of the kingdom, and doing the mighty works that were the royal witnesses to His authority and power to establish the kingdom among them. Saved and sheltered the scattered sheep might be, if they would but hear and heed the voice of the Imperial Shepherd that called them. In seeking these lost ones Jesus begins to fulfil—what He afterwards announced—a primary mission: limited to "the lost sheep of the house of Israel" (Matt. 15:24).

Of the utmost importance is it to keep this in mind if we are to understand the instructions given to the messengers sent forth to proclaim Him throughout the land of Israel. These messengers were clothed with power and authority to do mighty deeds such as He had done, and thus their message should be accredited by the same Messianic signs that had accredited Him. Jesus, in sending them forth, commanded them: "Go not into the way of the Gentiles, and into any city of the

Samaritans enter ye not: but go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel; and as ye go, preach, saying, The kingdom of heaven is at hand" (Matt. 10:5-7).

In this commission to the twelve apostles Christian teachers may find neither instruction nor equipment. The proclamation of the kingdom, so strictly limited within the boundaries of Israel, is not to be given beyond these boundaries until the restriction, by Him that imposed it, be removed. Even to the Samaritans, with Jewish blood flowing in their veins, the fruit of mixed marriages—a practice abhorred and condemned—the gospel of the kingdom was not to be proclaimed. Under such rigid and inviolable restriction the twelve were sent forth. Of the Church they had no conception; for of the Church there had been no revelation as yet, and the terms of their commission they could not, therefore, misinterpret. The kingdom they were to announce was the kingdom predicted by the prophets, the kingdom of the Messiah, and of this kingdom it had been foretold, that the increase of His government and peace should have no end, upon the throne of David, and upon his kingdom, to order it and to establish it with judgment and with justice from henceforth even forever. Such was the kingdom pledged by the Lord God to the Messiah; and the promise had been reaffirmed by the angel Gabriel: and it was that

kingdom, and no other, that by the twelve apostles was to be proclaimed. Perfectly evident is it that such a kingdom the Messiah has never had, and every attempt that has been made to show that the Church is that kingdom has proved its hopelessness in the utter confusion of plain speech.

The proclamation committed to the twelve apostles differs widely from the evangelical message now going forth unto all nations, and only in principle may the instructions given to the twelve be made applicable in the present dispensation. Throughout the land of Israel—and nowhere else—the apostles were to go, healing the sick, cleansing the lepers, casting out demons, raising the dead: freely they had received, freely they were to give. Without food or raiment or money they were to go, and like ambassadors they were to claim sustenance from the Jews, who indeed owed allegiance to the King whom they—the twelve—represented. Into whatsoever city or village they entered there were they to inquire, as to who in it were worthy, and with them, till they went forth again, they were to abide. They were to enter the house with a salutation of peace, and if the house was worthy, their peace should with it abide; if the house was unworthy, the offered peace should to them return. From the house or the city refusing them a hearing they were to depart, shaking the dust from their feet as

a testimony of repudiation of those that were in revolt against their King. Such instructions, were the modern evangelist to attempt to follow them, would lead to grave perplexity; yet the underlying principle is in all dispensations the same, and God has ever honored faith that has wrought in accordance therewith.

Of what they might expect, the Lord warns the apostles, and He tells them of the spirit in which they were to execute their commission. As sheep they were going forth into the midst of wolves—a perilous venture, surely, and, therefore, wary as serpents must they be, and guileless as doves. They were His messengers, and they would meet with the most violent opposition; be dragged into the ecclesiastical courts, and scourged in the synagogues; they should even be brought before princes and kings—the Gentile secular powers—and there be compelled to bear witness to Him whose ambassadors they were. Under such adverse circumstances they were to take no thought of the manner of their defense; for the Spirit of their Father should supply them with wisdom and with words. Against them opposition should rage with such fierceness that the strongest natural ties would be broken, brother delivering up brother to death, fathers rising against their children, and children against their fathers, causing them to be put to death; and they

should be hated and persecuted, compelled to flee from one city to another: but they that endured to the end should be saved. Before they should have gone over the cities of Israel—their mission, therefore, unexecuted—the Son of man should have come. These words have been variously understood. Just what construction the apostles put on them it would be difficult to say. Certain is it that, long after this, they had no thought nor expectation of the Lord's death and resurrection, and, therefore, extremely doubtful is it that they had any apprehension of what might be meant by the coming of the Son of man, which for the first time is here mentioned. They may have had the impression, gathered from what might have seemed to them to have been the natural force of the words, that before they had finished their testimony the Lord would personally join them. Beyond a peradventure is it that the "coming of the Son of man" means here, as elsewhere, the return of the Lord from heaven; equally clear is it, that a testimony, limited in its application to Israel, will be going forth when the Son of man does come. No other interpretation is at all possible, and this involves no perplexity except to those that fail to see that the coming of Christ in glory means:—the redemption of the promises, the deliverance of Israel, the establishment of the kingdom, and the trium-

phant vindication of Christ's Messianic claims.

No record is made as to where the apostles went, or as to what they accomplished: their progress necessarily, because of the opposition encountered, would be slow; and the arrest and condemnation of their King interrupted and put an end to their testimony altogether. The commission given to them just before the ascension of Jesus was radically different from the one now under consideration: they no longer were to confine their testimony to Israel, but they were to sound it forth to the uttermost parts of the earth.

When, under the terms of the first commission, the twelve were sent forth to proclaim the kingdom, Christianity was not in view, nor was there in their proclamation anything that was at all applicable to Christianity. Under entirely different terms was Christianity to be proclaimed, and of the two proclamations there can be no reconciliation: they are essentially unlike.

The apostles, under the original commission, went forth, and as they went, they were to preach, saying, The kingdom of heaven is at hand. This was the message of John the Baptist, and the message likewise of Jesus, and it meant—and it was intended to mean—that the kingdom predicted by the Hebrew prophets was at hand. Of Christianity the

prophets predicted nothing; because nothing of Christianity did they know: they foretold the coming of a literal kingdom, the restoration of David's throne, upon which the Messiah with unparalleled power and glory was to reign. This kingdom the twelve were sent forth to announce as being at hand. By the King's death they were confounded, and thereby their testimony was brought to an abrupt end. Not till after the resurrection was it that their understanding was opened, giving them a vision of Christianity coming in the place of Judaism. This to the apostles did not mean that the kingdom had been given up: on the contrary, Peter, on the day of Pentecost, preaches the kingdom, and in the temple, after the healing of the lame man, he again preaches the kingdom; nor is the door opened at all to the Gentiles until Stephen—charged with the defiant message of the Jews, We will not have this man to reign over us—is sent in martyrdom after the rejected King. The King's final rejection kindled the wrath of God, and evoked the sentence of judicial blindness that ever since has rested like an impenetrable mist upon the Jewish people; but certain is it, from the twenty-fourth chapter of Matthew's Gospel, that "the gospel of the kingdom" is to be proclaimed—and must be—to all nations before the end comes: and such proclamation—as the context shows—is to be given in im-

mediate connection with the return of the Son of man in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory. Conclusive therefore is it that the commission given to the twelve, interrupted by the King's death, is to be taken up once more, and is to be under process of execution when the Son of man comes.

The present dispensation of Grace to the Gentiles is a parenthesis, lying between the casting away of Israel and their future restoration to favor; and the "gospel of the kingdom" is now in abeyance, and in abeyance is to continue, till the Church, the body of Christ, is formed, after which the gospel of the kingdom shall be taken up and proclaimed to the nations, immediately before the coming of the King in glory. Except this distinction be observed there can be no intelligible conception of the manner in which the kingdom is to be introduced and established. Christ was Israel's Messiah. As such He offered Himself to the nation, and sent forth His messengers to proclaim Him. He limited the proclamation to Israel because He was Israel's Messiah—Israel's King, in royal relation to that nation as He was to no other. The studied neglect of His peculiar relationship to Israel has thrown a pall of darkness over the whole character of His Messianic mission. In the terms of the commission given to the apostles, when He sent them forth as His representatives announcing the

kingdom, He plainly shows the kind of treatment that they should receive. They were not to expect, nor could they hope to receive, better treatment than had been to Him accorded: disciples they were, and servants of Him, their Master and Lord, and whatsoever of opprobrium had fallen on Him should fall also upon them. They were, nevertheless, to be fearless in the presentation of the truth before which, as before a mighty search-light. all things should stand revealed. The worst that could befall them would be the death of the body. They, while bold in the presence of them that had the power of inflicting death, were yet to stand in awe of One that had authority beyond the realms of death, and One by whom their eternal destiny was to be determined. Their Father's omniscient eye should follow them in all their service, and nothing that concerned them should escape His notice. Were not two sparrows sold for a farthing? and not one of them was to fall to the ground without the Father's notice; and they, of more value than many sparrows, could count on the tender care of One that had numbered the very hairs of their head. Before men, at whatever cost, confess Christ they must, and they in return by Christ should be confessed before the Father: their denial of Him is to be His denial of them.

As the Prince of Peace He had been named by one of the prophets, and a multitude of

the heavenly host had announced at His birth peace on earth: but prophet and heavenly host alike were looking forward—and hailing the advent of the Messiah of Glory; when the work of righteousness should be peace, and the effect of righteousness quietness and assurance forever.

Not peace, but the very opposite of peace, so the apostles were forewarned, should follow His first advent. The assertion of His Messianic claims would set families at variance, and those bowing to His authority should be obliged to choose between Him and all others, whether it be father or mother or sister or brother: and whosoever should accept Him was warned of the most violent opposition that should in his own household arise against him. Not one that had not the courage to meet this inevitable conflict and take up his cross and follow Christ should be worthy of Him. Here is a claim of Imperialism more than royal, and it is one that none other than Christ has ever ventured to assert; and yet it is a claim that no man with the least apprehension of Christ's glory has had the temerity to contest.

Jesus, in speaking of a "cross," gives for the first time an intimation of the darkness through which He must pass before He could establish the kingdom in power and in glory. From the beginning He knew what lay before Him, and by no gradual process did He come

to a consciousness of His Messianic mission. The cross was inevitable; endured it must be: no other path for Him led to the throne: and though while dying upon the cross, that Cross should be the sign of His deepest reproach, thereafter and forever that Cross should be the symbol of His highest glory. This the apostles were slow in apprehending. Strange the warfare to which they were summoned—No soldier saving his life except by dying for his King!

The Messiah's sorrows, which had so perplexed the prophets, did not enter into the popular conception of the Messianic mission, but the failure to discern this necessity of suffering does not prove that the national hope was in other respects without justification, and false. The apostles went forth to the Jewish people with a message of definite meaning, and this message was accredited by signs and wonders done by them. They did not understand the manner in which the kingdom was to be introduced: for this involved what they were yet in ignorance of—the suffering, death, resurrection, and second advent of the King; but none the less true was their message, and it was designed to evoke the hostility of the nation, and thereby accomplish the determinate counsels of God.

The apparent collapse of the Jewish national hope, and the sentence of judicial blindness executed upon that nation, have

produced a confusion of thought from which the spiritual interpretation of the kingdom provides no escape. Almost impossible is it to conceive how any one can be really satisfied with a method of interpretation that, in order to be consistent, is obliged at every turn to torture words into a strange and unnatural meaning. The result of such interpretation has been disastrous in the extreme, blotting out the dispensational features of Scripture, and blinding the eyes of many to the full glory of the Imperialism pledged to the Lord Jesus Christ. On the other hand, a hard and exacting literalism may lead us astray, in the opposite direction.

The restoration of Jerusalem, the return of the Jews, the reign of the Messiah from the throne of David, are a possible conception, and it may be one in which there is no degradation of the personal glory of our Lord Jesus Christ—if it be derived from Scripture, and not from imagination.

In the restoration of a lost world there is involved a work of whose nature and processes man can have, apart from Revelation, no apprehension whatever. If for that Revelation we substitute our own judgment, or if we modify that Revelation by giving its words an unnatural meaning, we are in danger of distorting the truth, and so may lose the object for which the Revelation was given. If the Revelation were of no author-

ity, we should of course be at liberty to think as we please, an achievement that would be of no consequence but to ourselves, and to those that have the misfortune of being led by us.

The glory of the Lord Jesus Christ pervades and illumines and interprets all Scripture, and we may be assured that in the redemption of the pledges of His Imperialism there will be upon that glory neither blemish nor stain.

For whatever of service there is rendered to this glorious King there is recompense measured and full, whether to the twelve men that proclaimed Him throughout the land of Israel, or to those that in the day of His present grace make Him known to a world upon which there is yet lying the shadow of His cross. He identifies Himself, as of old, with those that He sends forth to be the heralds of His grace, and by Him the least of service shall be remembered, and shall in nowise lose its reward. The message that is now to be sounded forth is not the same as of old: no longer is it limited to Israel: not now is it a promise of the kingdom at hand; but an evangel is it to a world of sinners of salvation through faith in a crucified Redeemer, who is risen, and is glorified, and is coming again. Such is the commission entrusted to us, and it should not be confounded with the exclusive and distinctive one that was committed

to the twelve. They were to proclaim a kingdom to Israel: we are to proclaim salvation to the ends of the earth. To this proclamation we are called, for this we are equipped, and in this we are sustained by One whom the heaven must receive till the times of the restitution of all things which God hath spoken by the mouth of all the holy prophets since the world began.

The Church and the Kingdom are not the same, though both are the inheritance of Christ: the one to show in the ages to come the exceeding riches of His grace; the other to exhibit and to vindicate to the kingdoms of this world His Eternal Absolutism as King of Kings and Lord of Lords.

CHAPTER VIII

The Breach of the Covenant

THE more fully the Messiah manifested Himself in the supreme glory of His character and of His claims, the more evident it became that He would be rejected by the nation: the self-assertion of His deity was, in fact, the ground of His condemnation.

The religious leaders from the first stood aloof, viewing Him with suspicion, and demanding of Him some sign of a political revolution through which they were expecting a national emancipation. This unbelief of theirs was perhaps strengthened by the fact that John the Baptist had been cast into prison, and no retributive justice had overtaken the infamous tyrant that had thus requited the warning that John had given him. Even John himself seems to have been assailed with doubt as the days dragged by with no evidence of any definite action being taken to establish the kingdom—in so far as he could gather from those having access to his dungeon. Had he, in proclaiming the kingdom to be at hand, made a mistake? Was it possible that the Messiah had not come yet? Questions of this sort were evidently troubling him, and in distress of mind he

called two of his disciples, and sent them to Jesus, saying, Art thou He that should come? or look we for another? Jesus, in answer, did the mighty works that were the accrediting signs of His Messianic mission, and then to John's messengers He said: "Go your way, and tell John what things ye have seen and heard; how that the blind see, the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead are raised, to the poor the gospel is preached: and blessed is he, whosoever shall not be offended in me."

From John there comes no further question. This evidence of Messiahship he accepts, and calmly awaits the martyrdom that confronts him.

The words that follow show how clearly Jesus foresaw His own rejection in that of His forerunner. By what motive had the people been drawn to that Jordan valley, where they had flocked to hear John preach? Did they find there a reed that might be shaken by the wind? Was that fearless preacher arrayed in garments that betokened a life of luxury? Had he not rather, like an apparition from the Old Testament, startled them with the thought that once again a prophet's voice was sounding in Israel's land?

And John *was* a prophet; yea, more than a prophet, judicially summing up the history of the ages past; and he was one of whom

long before it had been written: "Behold I send my messenger before thy face, who shall prepare thy way before thee."

Thus accredited, John had aroused a fleeting emotion, but his impassioned speech, like a torrential downpour falling into a shallow cup, had made no deep nor lasting impression. True, the multitudes confessing their sins had gone to him for baptism; but, though he had been thus popularly owned as a prophet, he had been flung into prison by their wicked ruler, and what protest, national or individual, had been made? Perhaps, indeed, the people secretly rejoiced over the atrocious act that had silenced that stern voice: yet among them, born of women, there had not appeared one greater than John. But great as he was, the one comparatively little in the kingdom of heaven was greater: not morally greater, but *positionally* greater. John had been sent of God to blow the horn of jubilee; to declare that the kingdom long promised was at hand; and he, standing outside the kingdom, while yet proclaiming it, had place and privilege actually less than had the least within.

To regard the kingdom here referred to as the Church is a common and often repeated mistake, but whoever insists in this only confuses what Scripture keeps separate and distinct. The Church, while it is not the king-

dom, is none the less one of the kingdom's "mysteries"; but, even as such, the Church does not come into view until it is definitely certain that Israel will reject her King. The Lord is undoubtedly speaking of the kingdom foretold by the prophets, who prophesied of Christianity nothing, and whose message had as burden the coming of Messiah's kingdom, when the dishonored throne of David should be lifted from its ruins, and Israel, redeemed from sin and bondage, should be exalted among the nations of the earth to a place of unparalleled splendor and greatness. By a denial of this, or by what is equivalent to a denial of it—the application of these prophecies to the Church, nothing is to be gained. That Israel in the day of our Lord lost the kingdom does not in the least affect the precise and primary application of these prophecies, and such application is fully justified by its delivering us from the blinding mist of the spiritual interpretation that has for its warrant not even a suggestion of scriptural authority. Difficult is it to break from the necks of those that are impatient with such an assertion, and that refuse to give the subject the attention it deserves, the yoke of traditional teaching. But it must at least be evident that any torturing of the meaning of words into a meaning other than what they were intended to convey must inevitably lead to a distortion of truth. In connection with

the very thing now under consideration, Jesus tells us that the kingdom of heaven suffereth violence, and the violent take it by force. This "violence" is now given expression more refined in the persistent substitution of the Church in the place of the kingdom; by which the national kingdom of Israel is practically blotted out, and forever. The Church is the body of Christ, and His body must go *from* the earth to come *to* it with Him when He comes to establish the kingdom. Certain this is, because positively declared by Scripture, and to ignorance of this fact the general misapplication of the kingdom-promises is due.

In response to prophecy there had come, in the person of John the Baptist, Elijah—if the nation would but receive him; but this the nation did not: they gave heed neither to him nor to Jesus of whom John bore witness; therefore, Elijah must come yet, in order to restore all things.

The generation to which John and Jesus appealed acted like children, idle and fretful, whom none could please. With John they were irritated because he refused to dance to their piping: with Jesus they were resentful and petulant because He would not lament in response to their "crooning of the coronach." Nothing could suit them. John came in the way of righteousness, with his stern call to repentance, and they said, "He hath a

demon—would drive us to the tombs!" Christ came eating and drinking, and they said, "He is a glutton, and a wine drinker—would lure us into the abominable company of publicans and sinners!" But wisdom is justified of her children, and her children among such an offspring of folly are to be found—never!

The mercies of God, thus slighted, only deepened the degradation of the people, and added to the weight of their condemnation. Let them think of the cities wherein His mighty deeds had been done! Chorazin! Bethsaida! Capernaum—exalted unto heaven! What had not they seen? Had Tyre and Sidon, rich and luxurious cities by the sea, and even Sodom, sunk in its infamy, witnessed such scenes, they would have repented in sackcloth and ashes, and, because of this, for them it should be more tolerable in the day of judgment. But no longer possible was it to expect anything from the people for whose deliverance He had come. Evident more and more was it that they would not receive Him; and Jesus, turning from them, gives utterance to a royal, yea, more than royal, proclamation that was to be carried far beyond the boundaries of Judaism, and was to be heard in the uttermost parts of the earth.

"Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find

rest unto your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light."

Who, save the Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God, could put forth a claim such as this? —yea, and have it certified by millions of the weary in heart, that have found and borne witness to the rest He gives? He is the King of Israel, yea, and more than the King of Israel, a King divine, clothed with authority, and of boundless resources, to give rest to the unrested soul. World-wide is the offer, and open is it to them that make a full surrender to Him, and that lay down the arms of their rebellion against Him. For none other than the surrendered is there rest, unless it were rest in sin, and such fearful anesthesia God is too gracious to allow, or permit.

The new evangel from the lips of Jesus, so widely different from the gospel of the kingdom, speaks once more of the dispensational change impending, and it shows that Jesus then, and for the first time, had taken a place practically outside the limits of Judaism.

The twelfth chapter of Matthew shows the breach of the Old Covenant, which, if there was to be any true and lasting blessing for either Israel or for the world, must be done away with, and forever. That Covenant, with its blessings conditioned on obedience, had proved—as to the Jews, who alone were under it—that there was among them none righteous, no, not one: that verdict they stub-

bornly refused to accept, and this forced them to take refuge in a self-righteousness that expressed itself finally, in all the reality of its awful rebellion against God, in the nailing to the cross their Messiah. The legal covenant, with its righteous requirement, had in fact been violated from the beginning; and yet the Jews, heedless of the condemnation under which they lay, clung to it with a tenacity that bore pathetic witness to how little they understood either their own moral condition or the holiness of God: so that Christ, when He plainly exposed the breach of that covenant, instead of arousing the Jew to the sense of sin and ruin and shame, evoked a spirit of bitter and violent hostility, which expressed itself in their deliberate rejection of Him.

The question had been brought to an issue by the Pharisees, who had demanded of Him, Why His disciples had done that which it was not lawful for them to do on the Sabbath day? They had passed through the cornfield, and, having been hungry, had plucked the ears of corn, and, having rubbed them in their hands, had eaten them. The law permitted them, if they were hungry, to gather the corn for eating; but the *rubbing in the hands* was construed by the Pharisees as *work;* therefore, a violation of the law.

Before the Lord's answer to this charge is considered, we should be clear as to the mean-

ing of the Sabbath, and as to its peculiar signification in and to the covenant of which it formed a part. The covenant between God and Israel was constituted and expressed in the ten commandments, and of that covenant the Sabbath was the sign. (Ex. 34:27, Ezek. 20:12). This investment of the Sabbath with the character of a sign differentiates from all the others the fourth commandment, and gives to it a peculiar and distinctive place among them. The fourth commandment was, of the ten, the only one in which the thing prohibited was not in itself evil. The other nine were rooted in the very nature of God, and, covenant or no covenant, the things in them forbidden were wrong to do. The Sabbath, being a sign of the relationship between God and Israel, and the commandment for its observance being positive and non-moral, was something that—when such relationship no longer existed—could fail and pass away, as no other part of the decalogue could do. The seventh day, which was the Jewish Sabbath, derives its original significance from the fact that "God blessed the seventh day, and sanctified it: because that in it he had rested from all his work which God created and made" (Gen. 2:3). No further mention of it is made till twenty-five centuries after, when in the book of Exodus it is spoken of as a memorial of the rest into which God had entered. In the decalogue the commandment

for its observance was incorporated, on the ground of its being a "sign" of the covenant —expressed by the decalogue—between God and Israel. Of that covenant the rejection of Christ was the final breach, and on account of this the Sabbath—as a sign—loses its signification, and may pass away. That it did pass away is evident from the Lord's answer to the Pharisees. He calls their attention to what David did, and those with him, when they entered the house of God, and, in contravention of a Levitical statute, ate the shew-bread, which it was not lawful for him to eat, nor for those with him, but only for the priests. Here was a direct infringement of the law: but not so was it with His disciples: they had violated merely an unsound traditional interpretation of the law. Were David and his companions, then, justified in doing what they had done? Undoubtedly—or else the Lord had not cited them in justification of what His disciples had done. David, when he had eaten the shew-bread, was the anointed king of Israel; and yet, though thus anointed, his royal rights were denied to him, and he was a fugitive, hunted and persecuted by Saul, whom God had dis-crowned. What binding force, then, remained in a Levitical statute—a statute that betokened a spiritual relationship between God and Israel, when, by the rejection of their God-ordained king, such relationship was utterly broken and repudi-

ated! Such statute, under the circumstances, had no binding force. And now history was solemnly repeating itself. Here were they—contending for a Sabbath, the sign of their covenant with God, while they, at the same time, were rejecting their glorious King upon whom alone their relationship to God depended! The sign had lost its significance. There *was* no Sabbath; nor could there be for them a day of holy rest so long as they refused their King, who also was Lord of that Sabbath day. In the breach of the covenant, its sign, the Jewish Sabbath, passed away, and is to be no more, until God His covenant renews with Israel. Every commandment of the decalogue, save the fourth, is in the New Testament reaffirmed and sanctioned. The Lord's Day, the memorial not of rest, but of resurrection energy, is another matter.

Jesus, in further justification of His disciples, calls the attention of the Pharisees to the fact that in the sacrificial offerings the priests in the temple profaned the Sabbath, and were guiltless. These offerings, proclaiming, as they did, God's mercy through sacrifice, were the witnesses of the failure of the legal covenant, and where, as in these offerings, grace was in conflict with law, the "sign" of the legal covenant must give way before it. But grace was a word foreign to the vocabulary of these legalists, who, in the formal routine of the temple offerings, dis-

cerned no outshining of God's mercy. Had they so done, they also would have discerned the glory of Him, who, greater than the temple, had come to manifest—as never before had it been manifested—the grace of God to Israel.

Jesus declares Himself to be the Lord of the Sabbath, and, in answer to a further challenge from the Pharisees, He does a work that demonstrates His right to that title. In the synagogue there was a man with a hand withered, and the Pharisees ask, Is it lawful to heal on the Sabbath day? Jesus replies with a counter question, Would not ye lift a sheep from a pit on the Sabbath? Is not a man worth more than a sheep? Yea, it was lawful to heal on the Sabbath, and He said to the man, Stretch forth thy hand. And he stretched it forth, and it was restored as sound as the other. This work of mercy but intensifies the hatred of the Pharisees, and out they go, and take secret counsel how they may destroy Him. To this action they definitely commit themselves, and they continue in their course of rebellious hostility to Jesus, until, at the hands of Pilate, they secure His condemnation.

Their rejection the Lord accepts, and the grace that He came to minister to them is turned from its course, and flows out to the Gentiles. Prophecy had foretold that to the Gentiles He would show judgment, and that

in His name the Gentiles should trust. And yet, the present Christian dispensation is not contemplated in this prophecy: it looks on rather to a day still future, when, after Israel's exaltation, the nations shall receive their blessings. Only in connection with the reign of Messiah over Israel do the prophets speak of blessing going out to the Gentiles. Of the Church, the prophets have no vision at all. Yet not as a result of the establishing of the Messianic kingdom have the blessings of Christianity come: rather as a result of the national refusal of the kingdom have they come; but it still remains true that all blessings promised by the prophets to the Gentiles are contingent upon the kingdom's institution. The present outflow of blessing to the Gentiles, therefore, is a manifestation of mercy, of which the prophets of Israel had no pre-view. The kingdom, in all certainty, has not come yet, or, if it is contended that come it has, Why is it that we yet pray for it? The grace to be manifested to Gentiles in the day of the kingdom's institution is not the grace that is now being manifested. The grace that is now flowing, is flowing in a manner different from that contemplated by the prophets and it is flowing out to Jew and Gentile alike, and for them alike. The wall of partition having been broken down, the Church, the body of Christ, is being formed. This is a mystery of which the prophets speak not at

all. They tell us nothing of the Church, nor of the centuries of time that would be required to form the Church, and they, therefore, speak of the two advents of our Lord as if they were one, with no interval between them; and were it not for the revelation in the New Testament of the long interval between the advents there would be more of perplexity than there now is in the thought of the second and imminent appearing of our Lord.

The Christian dispensation followed the rejection of Jesus by the Jews, and upon that rejection was dependent: it was necessary, therefore, that such rejection should become unmistakably evident, before the incoming dispensation could be disclosed. Even after such rejection does become clear and certain, the Lord, ever patient in grace and in mercy, goes on to His formal presentation as their King; and this presentation, with a significant omission noted by Matthew, is made in accordance with the terms of Zechariah's prophecy.

But the covenant is already broken, and Jesus, by the casting out of a demon, brings to the surface the blasphemy underlying the hatred of the Pharisees. By them the exorcism is attributed to the power of Satan, and this Jesus declares to be blasphemy against the Holy Spirit: a sin for which there is no forgiveness, neither in that age, nor in the

coming—still coming — Messianic age, of which happy day the miracle itself was the harbinger of dawn.

"Mercy could no longer be shown where the power of the Spirit of God had, as power, to be owned, and yet attributed to Satan himself. This blasphemy was no longer ignorant unbelief: it was open-eyed opposition to God and to all that was of God. A word spoken against the Son of man might be forgiven; the lowly place that He had taken—though it were in the fullest grace and to meet the need of man—might yet hide His glory from the eyes of carnal men; but here was what had to be owned, could not be hidden: open-eyed hatred could not be forgiven, could never be. They expected fuller mercy in the age to come—in Messiah's day—than in the present age of law: but this could never be forgiven, in this age nor in that to come."

Here, then, was the ripe fruit manifesting the character of the tree that bore it. They were a brood of vipers, as John had declared them to be, destitute of all righteousness; and yet, blind to their moral condition, and deaf to any warning that might be given them to flee from the wrath to come. But such condemnation they repudiated, and from Jesus they demanded a sign. Like men with eyes fast shut they were, and crying out for light. A sign! Had He not given them sign after

sign, every single sign demonstrating His Messianic claims? To that wicked and adulterous generation there should be given no sign other than that of Jonah the prophet. Jonah had been swallowed by the sea, and then by the great fish in whose belly—as in a double tomb—he had lain for three days and three nights, and after that, like a man risen from the dead, he had preached in the streets of Nineveh until the whole city in repentance fell prostrate before God. But even such a sign would be without meaning to these Pharisees. By them the Son of man, rejected and cast out, would be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth, and after that He would arise and preach to them; but they, more wicked and more hardened than the Ninevites, should be to a message so attested scornfully indifferent. But the men of Nineveh should arise in judgment with that generation, and should condemn it; and not only they, but the queen of the South as well should condemn it: for she came from her far distant dominions to hear the wisdom of Solomon, while that generation, with a Greater than Solomon standing among them, perceived nothing of His wisdom, nothing of His glory. He goes on to predict the deeper depth of iniquity into which the nation should sink.

The unclean spirit that had once possessed the nation had gone voluntarily forth, and,

coming back, had found the house "empty, swept, and adorned." With the demon gone, empty indeed was the house, and Israel had taken and used the law as a broom to sweep to the door the very motes of unrighteousness floating in the sunbeams through the windows, and then with their own self-righteousness they had set a-decking the walls of the house from which, though they might indeed exclude Christ, they could not exclude the returning unclean demon. He should come back, and with him seven other demons more evil than he, and these should claim and take possession of the house, and its last state should be worse than its first, immeasurably.

So Israel must go on to the day of her "anguish and gloom." She has refused God's truth, and with others guilty of the same folly she is wandering in a spiritual mist that shall bring her into the belief of Satan's lie. Over Israel demoniacal power shall be increased sevenfold, and in the agony and sorrow of that enthralment, she shall return and find mercy in Him whom she here refuses.

Their rejection of Him is seen to be inevitable and decisive. From them Jesus turns, and, disclaiming even the ties of natural relationship, proclaims that whosoever henceforth shall do the will of His Father in heaven, the same shall be His brother, and sister, and mother.

The light of the new dispensation, like that of the first day in Genesis, breaks over a barren and restless sea; but this light shall lift the darkness from the face of the deep, and the things that were hidden from the foundation of the world shall stand revealed.

CHAPTER IX

The Second Presentation

JESUS in His second and formal presentation to Jerusalem rides into the city as the Prince of Peace. This Matthew declares to have been in fulfilment of Zechariah's prophecy, though the Evangelist quotes the passage with significant omissions, showing the non-completion of the prophecy, which for its full accomplishment depends upon the nation's acceptance of the King.

The royal journey begins at Jericho, in the Jordan valley, where Jesus, in restoring sight to two blind men that appeal to Him as the Son of David, openly accepts the title of the Messiah. Nor does He, as on previous occasions, the public avowal of this forbid: the decisive hour in which the nation openly must accept or reject Him has come. On His journey to the city He makes known to the disciples that He goes in the full consciousness of all that is there awaiting: the betrayal, the trial, the condemnation,—on the part of the Jews; the mockery, the cruel scourging,—on the part of the Gentiles; the bitter agony of the cross,—Jew and Gentile uniting to lift Him there; the appalling darkness, and yet, beyond—the light of the resurrection morning! But the disciples were without under-

standing, and not until after these things had been accomplished did they perceive the inseparable accouplement of the cross and the crown.

At Beth-phage,—"the house of unripe figs" —a signification that is soon shown to be applicable to the Jewish nation, He sends into the village two of His disciples to unloose and bring the colt upon which, in specific fulfilment of prophecy, He is to ride into the city, acclaimed by the multitudes as the King of Israel. The "colt" was the symbol of royalty and peace, and is in contrast with the war-horse upon which He rides when, in power and glory, He comes to take the kingdom. But the crown is to be taken by the way of the cross: and the Prince of Peace rides on to die.

"Ride on, ride on in majesty!
In lowly pomp, ride on to die!
Bow Thy meek head to mortal pain,
Then take, O God! Thy power, and reign!"

As from the mount of Olives He descends towards the city the multitudes enthusiastically hail Him as the Son of David, quoting from the one hundred and eighteenth Psalm words that for definite and precise fulfilment rest upon the nation's acceptance of the King. But the King, in fact, was already discrowned, and that acclamation, so empty of its true significance then, shall once more be

taken up, as Jesus declares it shall be, and in the day—the now nearing day—of His glory it shall be given its full and final expression.

But none the less in good faith is the formal presentation of the King. He enters the city, but there He finds no welcome. Into the temple goes He, and there views, in silent contemplation, that which is done or doing; then retires He to Bethany—"the house of humiliation." In deepening darkness night falls upon the city: her people unconscious of the day of their visitation.

On the morrow, as Jesus and His disciples came out of the village of Bethany, "He was hungry: and seeing a fig-tree afar off having leaves, he came, if haply he might find anything thereon: and when he came to it he found nothing but leaves; for the time of figs was not yet: and Jesus answered and said unto it, No man eat fruit of thee hereafter forever: and his disciples heard it." Since have many others heard, and by it have been much perplexed. Yet the application is not far to seek: Israel, as a nation, is figuratively represented as a "vine" brought up out of Egypt and planted in the land of Canaan; this vine under God's favor rooted and grew, overshadowed the mountains, and extended in growth from the river to the sea; but from this vine there came no fruit. God looked for grapes, and, lo, wild grapes! Then suffered He the hedge to be broken, and the vineyard

to become desolate. Israel by the Assyrians was swept away; Judah by the Babylonians was carried into captivity; all the people were scattered: by the feet of the Gentiles the vineyard was laid waste and trodden down. Then in behalf of Judah a fresh work was started: from Babylon was brought back a remnant of the people, and this remnant was likened to a "fig-tree" planted in the vineyard. This fig-tree was the symbol of the Jewish nation in the time of Christ. He from this tree for three years sought fruit and found none. These facts are to be kept in mind if we are to understand our Lord's action in the cursing of the fig-tree.

The fruit of the fig-tree appears as soon as the leaves appear; and, for that reason, leaves on a fig-tree proclaim by their presence the presence also of figs. The Lord saw the tree, having leaves, and, justly expecting to find its fruit, He went to it; but, finding nothing but leaves, He doomed the tree to perpetual barrenness. A parable in action it was, as puzzling to His disciples as were most of His parables spoken. Like that tree was the Jewish nation: in leaves of profession exuberant, but of fruit corresponding there was none. The blighting of the fig-tree was a picture and a prophecy of national judgment impending. Had the nation understood this, and acknowledged its empty profession, the judgment might have been

averted. But the nation, in singular ignorance of its unfruitfulness, understood not.

The Lord with His disciples goes on to the city, and, upon entrance into the temple, He finds it desecrated by the same abominable traffic, of which, at the beginning of His ministry, He had purged it. Of old that temple had been the throne of His glory, and had been designed to be for all nations a house of prayer; but through the greed and avarice of the priesthood it had been perverted into a den of pilferers. Long had it been foretold, as a feature and blessing of the kingdom age, that there "should be no more a Canaanite" — or "trafficker" — "in the house of the Lord of hosts" (Zech. 14:21); and this purgation of the temple is related to the King's formal presentation, as was the other to the first passover. In the temple — His Father's house — the King assumes royal authority, to which, even while their anger flames out against Him, they are forced to bow. The loud voiced iniquity is silenced, and into the temple, now freed of defilement, there come to Jesus the blind and the lame — concurrent types of those that are to find blessing in the Kingdom Age — and He heals them all.

Though, as the King of Israel, He thus accredits Himself, the priests and the scribes are indignant because He permits the children to utter the cry that had been hushed in the streets — "Hosanna to the Son of David!"

The wrath of priest and scribe He rebukes, and reminds them of their failure to understand a scripture that often must have been under their eyes: the mouths of babes and sucklings were pouring forth a lore that had baffled the wisdom of the ancients and the understanding of the wise. With this He leaves them, and returns to Bethany, and there passes the night.

Early in the morning, as He and His disciples pass by, they see the fig-tree dried up from the roots. To this Peter calls the attention of Jesus, but He only emphasizes the necessity of their having the *Faith of God:* "Amen, I say unto you, That whosoever shall say unto this mountain, Be thou removed, and be thou cast into the sea; and shall not doubt"—make scruples—"in his heart, but shall believe that those things which he saith shall come to pass, it shall be for and to him thus." The application He leaves to be made by themselves. Does He mean that Israel, now but an obstacle in the path of faith, was doomed to barrenness, and as a mountain should disappear into the sea of the nations? Such, in fact, has been her doom. Jesus, in an after-prophecy of Israel's return to fruitfulness, bids her learn of the fig-tree a parable: when the branch should become tender and put forth her leaves, they should know that Summer was nigh. This gracious intimation betokens His coming again in glory.

Under the warmth of that glad Sunrise Israel's long Winter of barrenness shall end in her Summer of fruit.

To the temple Jesus returns again, and, while there teaching, the ecclesiastics demand of Him the authority by which He speaks. His works of power, certifying an authority greater than their own, accept they will not. To them Jesus puts a counter question, The baptism of John, whence was it? From heaven, or of men? The answer, the alternative issue of which they are without courage to meet, they decline. Were they to say, From heaven, He could reply, Why then did ye not believe him? Were they to say, Of men, they feared the people, who regarded John as a prophet; and "theirs was no martyr spirit to suffer for their convictions." So their answer was, We know not. If, then, they, the representatives of the supreme court in Israel, confess their incompetence to pass on the claims of John, surely they were alike incompetent to adjudicate His claims. Nor would He tell them under whose authority He was acting. They were but evading the issue, and Jesus probes their conscience with another question: A man had two sons, and to the first he said, Go work to-day in my vineyard: and he defiantly answered, I will not; but he afterward repented and went. To the second son he said likewise: and he answered and said, I go, sir; but went not.

Which of these did the will of his father? They answered, The first. Hardly necessary was the application, though Jesus makes it, with a directness that breaks through the hollow crust of their hypocrisy, and lets the truth flash in. John the Baptist had come in the way of righteousness, and they with their boasted profession of obedience to God had given John the Baptist no heed: while the people that lived in open wickedness had repented and believed; and yet the obedience of these outcasts had not shamed those that were deceiving themselves with the vain thought that they were doing the will of God.

Never did a sovereign ruler so patiently plead with insubordinate subjects to bring them back to obedience and blessing than did He. But the forbearance, so long extended, was now coming to a close. Their continued resistance would only bring upon them the long delayed and overwhelming retribution. Jesus holds up before them a picture of the moral history of the nation of which they were now become the inheritors:—

A householder planted a vineyard—no unfamiliar figure to them—and put a hedge round it, and dug a winepress in it, and built a tower, and let it out to husbandmen, and went abroad; and when the time of fruit was come, he sent servants to receive it; but the husbandmen beat one of them, and killed another, and stoned another. Then other ser-

vants were sent, more than the first, but only to receive the same treatment. Finally the householder sent his son, saying, They will respect my son. But when the husbandmen saw the son, they said, This is the heir: come, let us kill him, and seize his inheritance: and they took him, and cast him out of the vineyard, and slew him.

Neither interpretation nor application did the parable need. It was of Israel's national history a concise and vivid picture. They indeed had seemed to have everything in their own hands, God leaving them alone—as He has left men in all dispensations—to develop under their own moral responsibility; and the silence of God, His patience and indirect dealing with them, had only hardened them against Him. Not a prophet could be named—as Stephen afterwards reminded them—that their fathers had not persecuted; and now had come the Son. Of His identity there was no misapprehension—there could be none—and of this the parable bears witness. In the full realization of His person and dignity, they said, This is the Heir; let us kill Him, and seize His inheritance. A fearful thing to face, if this calm Speaker was what He claimed to be, the Son of God! Could they, through destroying Him, obtain their blessing? In their insane folly they seem to think they may. But what would the householder do to such wicked husbandmen?

Jesus puts the question directly to them, and they answer it, and are forced to answer it, and in answering they pronounce their own doom—a doom that their own Scripture, so scrupulously guarded, had foretold long before. Had they never read of the stone that the builders rejected? That stone that was ordained of God to be the head of the corner? Very well, then, the inheritance they were so eager to acquire should be lost to them: the kingdom of God should be taken from them, and should be given to a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof. This prophecy was speedily fulfilled, in part. In refusing the King, the nation lost the kingdom He had come to establish: and the kingdom is yet to be given —not to the Church, surely—but to a nation, a nation of Israelites, in a day future, when, under the blessing of the new covenant, they shall become fruitful: and to this all the prophets bear witness. Nevertheless whosoever should fall on this stone—as the nation was about to do—was to be broken, and this Israel's history soon confirms; but upon whomsoever this stone should fall, as in the coming day of the Gentiles in banded rebellion against God, it was to grind them to powder: the kingdom itself, after this, becoming manifest, and filling the world with its glory.

The parable that follows is a parable of the kingdom of heaven, and it pictures what

was to take place upon the earth during the absence of the King, and till He should return to the scene of His rejection. Of such a period of time between the departure and return of the King, during which the grace of God should flow out to the Gentiles, the prophets of Israel have no pre-vision; and the misapprehension of this fact has produced an utterly false conception of the kingdom. The parables of the kingdom are the representation of what was to take place after the rejection of the King, and they, as a rule, contemplate the entire time between the departure of the King and His return to reign. This feature is unmistakable in the parable of the marriage of the king's son, which follows that of the husbandmen.

Although this wedding be a royal one, no allusion is made to the bride, but the attention is centered on the attitude of those receiving invitation to the feast. By them the royal servants are treated not merely with indifference, but with derision and contempt, and finally with violence, and this evokes the anger of the king, who sends forth his armies, and destroys the rebels, and burns down their city. This doubtless has reference to the judgment that overwhelmed the nation, and to the sack and burning of Jerusalem. But the grace of God, unhindered by the King's rejection, is seen, as in nearly all the other parables of the kingdom, flowing out to the

Gentiles. The royal servants are sent out into the by-ways of the highways, and as many as they find, both bad and good, they bid to the wedding. This is an unquestionable representation of the gospel-call that, since the rejection of Jesus by the Jews, has been sounding through the world. The parable, like the other parables of the kingdom, surveys the whole period between the two advents, and also contemplates the end of the age, when the King comes upon the scene and enters upon a separative judgment. The man "without the wedding garment" is a graphic figure of the great multitudes that hear the gospel-call, and that respond to it, and that are yet without the "best robe," which royal grace provides. The robeless man may be, nay, is, unconscious of his robelessness: he has heard the call only, and with no real sense of his desperate condition and need, with no realization of the holiness of God nor of what that holiness demands, he has appeared among the other guests without this "robe of righteousness," in which alone his presence is tolerable. That he remains speechless, when questioned by the king, shows clearly that he is without excuse; and at the feast he is not permitted to remain: he is bound hand and foot, and cast into the outer darkness—outside the light, the music and dancing, the joyous feast that is the one and the only hope of humanity!

This man is the solemn prefigurement of the many that, when the King returns to purge the kingdom, shall be cast out into the outer darkness. How perpetual and profound that darkness must be!

Many are called, but few are chosen; and yet, not arbitrary is the choice: upon the assembled guests the eyes of the King are fixed; He looks for the wedding garment, and the wearer of this is chosen—and of necessity chosen: divine righteousness requiring such choice—and the others—all others, are rejected and dismissed. Startling suggestion to the self-righteous Pharisee! Content was he to wear the robe of his own weaving, nor could he see the necessity of exchanging this for the wondrous fabric that was to be woven on the loom of Calvary.

The Pharisees hear; but heed, they do not: that they may entangle Jesus in talk do they rather take counsel. They were poles apart from the Herodians, and yet the Herodians are on the same low level, and of the same moral fibre as the Pharisees, when together with them they come to Jesus with their obsequious—"Teacher!"

A serious question they propose—at least serious in consequence it might be to one attempting to answer it,—"Is it lawful to give tribute to Cæsar, or not?" Dangerous it would be to affirm; dangerous to deny. Jesus does not evade the issue. The coin has

Cæsar's superscription: upon it, therefore, Cæsar has a claim, or else his superscription should not be thereon. This will furnish His answer to the astute and crafty question of His enemies. They are to render unto Cæsar the things that are Cæsar's, and unto God the things that are God's. Had they rendered unto God the things that were due Him, their necks should never have bowed under Cæsar's yoke: through the rejection of God's claims they had come under that yoke, and from its galling despotism there was no escape save through their acceptance of Christ, now come to them. At His answer they only marvel, and leave Him, and go their way.

The Sadducees, with their fine-spun fallacious reasoning, endeavor to entangle Jesus, but their specious quibbling is easily exposed. These rationalists, with no wisdom other than their own, betray their false pretension of knowledge in the questions that perplex them. Knowing neither the Scripture nor the power of God, they are the dupes of a vacuous sciolism.

The Pharisees come next, with their feline step, and propose to Jesus a suasive question concerning the law: Which is the greatest commandment in the law? Had they understood God aright, no question could have arisen about the comparative greatness of the laws He had enacted. God is love, and how could they, with their hearts aflame with

hatred, apprehend either His love or His law? But if they would have comparison, then the command to love God was the greatest: for that was grounded in the very nature that He had given them. That was the great and first commandment. And the second was like unto it: they were to love their neighbors as themselves—for in love to God and in love to man the whole law, which they by their subtle interpretations and fallacious theories had utterly distorted, found its sweetest expression as well as its complete fulfilment.

There is, however, a crucial question, and it is one that requires a clear and a categorical answer,—"What think ye of Christ? whose son is he?" The Pharisees reply, and rightly: "The son of David." Well, if that was true, and it was true—nor of its truth could there be the shadow of doubt where Scripture was owned as authoritative—then how could David in spirit call Him Lord, saying, "The Lord said unto my Lord, Sit thou on my right hand, till I make thine enemies thy footstool"? The Messiah in whom was centered the hope of the nation was indeed the Son of David; but He was much more. Did their carnal eyes see nothing more than a warrior-king of David's line? Did not their Scripture inspire a larger hope than this? If the Messiah were David's son merely, how was it possible for David to call Him Lord?

Jesus thus writes His signature across the

one hundred and tenth Psalm, which by the Pharisees was accepted as both Davidic and Messianic, and which is now questioned only by those that, more blind to the glory of Christ than were the Pharisees, would verily hoist their conjectural wisdom above wisdom incarnate. But the Pharisees know, and the light they resist; and useless is it to plead further with them. Fearful is it for one to know Scripture and then to fulfil it to one's own destruction! Here the Pharisees really faced an impasse. But Jesus goes on to warn them of the consequences. Jehovah had pledged Himself to espouse the cause of the rejected Messiah: this pledge, the Psalm, to which He had called their attention, had attested. The Messiah, though rejected by them, was to be raised to the highest pinnacle of glory, there to abide till His enemies should be made a footstool by which He might ascend to the throne that they now dared to deny Him.

The sevenfold woe pronounced upon the Pharisees was no passionate outburst of anger: it was rather the sorrowful summing up of the history of the ages past—showing that those ages of iniquity were now closing in review for judgment. Upon the generation then present, guilty of rejecting God's last offer of mercy, was swiftly coming the avenger of blood, and God would require of that generation the full retribution for all the righteous

blood shed upon the earth, from the blood of righteous Abel unto the blood of Zacharias, whose murder had stained the pages of their post-exilic history. The judgment that had so long lingered was now coming swiftly and with noiseless feet. The gracious warning of woe ends in an unavailing sob of sorrow:

"O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets, and stonest them which are sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not! Behold, your house is left unto you desolate: for I say unto you, Ye shall not see me henceforth, till ye shall say, Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord."

Since these words of sorrow were uttered, the weary centuries have rolled round in their course, and Israel in the desolation of her widowhood still abides; but nearing is the day when her warfare shall be accomplished, and her iniquity shall be pardoned. The glory of the Lord shall be revealed, and all flesh shall see it together: for the mouth of the Lord hath spoken it.

CHAPTER X

The Messiah of Sorrow

A SUFFERING Messiah! The thought was to the prophets perplexing, and to the apostles inconceivable. The same paradoxical conception would have been no otherwise entertained by ourselves had we lived in the days before the Cross, and had we been looking forward, as the National party in Israel was, to the advent of the Messiah in power and great glory.

This mental stumbling, most natural under the circumstances, arose from a lack of ability to reconcile logically what seemed to both prophets and apostles to be contrasting and contradictory predictions of suffering and of glory. But the suffering as well as the glory did the prophets clearly foresee: they made no attempt to reconcile the opposing twain; they predicted the suffering and they predicted the glory, but they knew not of the long interval of time that should separate the advent of the Messiah of Sorrow from the advent of the Messiah of Glory. This interval, unknown to prophets and apostles, lay completely hidden, like one of the dark planets that astronomers have found to be circling beside a fixed star.

The psychology of the mistake, in no wise

a blot in the escutcheon of prophets and apostles, is capable of exact analysis, and is best elucidated and exemplified in a concrete and parallel instance. Sometimes in the Scottish Highlands the traveler beholds what seems to him to be but one solitary mountain peak—this when he views it from afar, but as he draws nearer he is astonished to see amid the mists and clouds of the range the one great summit suddenly split into two, the one towering above the other, and, as he approaches nearer still, there lies at his feet what he never suspected in his distant vision: a wide valley between the peaks, with fields stretching verdant and fertile, linnets singing in the trees and larks soaring with their cascades of melody let down from the heights of the blue sky, and burns of babbling waters joining in the orchestra of nature as they make their harps out of the stones in their bed. The traveler, be it observed, had no obscurity of eyesight when he saw not at all this intervening valley; the simple matter of fact is, he could not see other than he did see: not two mountain peaks but one; and it was the very literalness of his far-away point of view that made his vision not untrue but most undeniably incomplete. Precisely so has it happened in the inspired Hebrew prophecy. There the perspective has been necessarily foreshortened—it could not be otherwise—and to those prophets thus peering into the

far future the two Advents of Christ seemed to blend into one—no more! But we have passed the one peak and are traversing the valley that lies between the First Advent and the Second; and the Second Advent is single now in reality on the horizon of time.

Ay, the one Advent the prophets saw—and they could not see but the one—has become two, and the predictive language of prophecy, as definite as mathematics, has to be distributed between the twain. The two Advents, in their very nature and happenings, are distinct and separate: the more distant Advent now future, yonder one of glory, towering above and transfiguring the Advent nearer, now past, this one of sorrow; while between them there is lying the long interval of centuries during which the Church is to be called out, and the Eternal Counsels, not in the pre-view of the prophets of Israel, are to be disclosed. We that are living in this interval of time stretching between the two Advents have continued so long with our faces turned backward to the Messiah of Sorrow that we are often altogether forgetful of the approaching Messiah of Glory. Past is the suffering, and it is prophecy accomplished, and is therefore no longer the object of faith, in the same sense, at least, as is, in its very nature, prophecy predictive: this contemplates His glory, and is still awaiting fulfilment; that unfolds His sorrow, and is long gone by. To this double

fact there must now be given double emphasis—in view of the nearing, nearing ever of His glory—and at the same time there must not be left obscure that vanished Sorrow through which the Messiah passed in order that He might take the throne. The work of the Cross, accomplished through sorrow unequaled, through pain mystic and unexampled, is the alone ground of our hope; and that work of the Cross it is that never changes in value, but abides as the source and ever-flowing fountain of present grace and of future glory.

Jesus steadfastly set His face toward the Cross, in the full consciousness of all that awaited Him there, nor did the glory that lay beyond it blind His eyes to the unutterable suffering that must by Him be endured. The *must* is as divine as the support in it, and the victory over it. Before Jesus lay the path of the just that, as the shining light, shineth more and more unto the perfect day; and this path of His feet He had pondered well in order that His steps might be thus taken in accordance with that Word in which was all His delight. Each foot-print He made in the journey sorrowful, from Gethsemane to Calvary, had been beforehand described, and in perfect obedience did Jesus commit Himself to the complete fulfilment of all that had thus been written concerning Him.

He was aware that for thirty pieces of sil-

ver—the price of a slave—He should be betrayed into the hands of His enemies—(Zech. 11:12); and yonder Judas Iscariot, though under the power of Satan, who had taken possession of him, was but the unconscious instrument for the accomplishment of what had been centuries before him predicted—(Matt. 26:14, 15), and in accomplishing it the traitor did not so much sell his Master as he sold his own soul!

In the same manner there had been foreseen and foretold every single step that led to the Cross. In the sacred narrative, indeed, there is not one comment about it, not one attempt at explanation. The light of prophecy flashes in the darkness, and there is revealed in its ray the fact of its completion coming, an exact and concise statement of what takes place in order that the prophecy might be fulfilled. This reserve of Scripture, and reserve in it, is a witness to the solitude essential and the sanctity divine of the path that wound from Gethsemane to Calvary. This path is not only a *via dolorosa;* it is also a *via sacra:* Its "stations" we may ecclesiastically mark now, but over it then, the Son of God must walk alone.

The smiting of the Shepherd was to scatter the sheep—(Zech. 13:7); and "all the disciples forsook him and fled" (Matt. 25:56).

There were false witnesses to rise up, and they were to lay to His charge misdeeds that

He knew not—(Psa. 35:11); and these prevaricating accusers were sought and found by ever-ready priests and elders—(Matt. 26:59, 60).

He was to give His back to the smiters, and His cheeks to them that plucked off the hair: nor should He hide His face from shame, and from spitting—(Is. 50:6); yea, "they spit in his face, and buffeted him; and others smote him with the palms of their hands" (Matt. 26:6, 7).

He was to be oppressed and afflicted; to be brought as a lamb to the slaughter, and, like a sheep dumb before her shearers, He should open not His mouth—(Is. 53:7); so, "when he was accused of the chief priests and elders, he answered nothing" (Matt. 27:12).

He was to be wounded for our transgressions, and to be bruised for our iniquities; the chastisement of our peace was to be on Him, and by His stripes we should be healed—(Is. 53:5); so, when Pilate "had scourged him, he delivered him to be crucified: and when they had platted a crown of thorns, they put it upon his head" (Matt. 27:26, 29).

His knees should become weak, and His flesh should fail—(Psa. 109:24); so, He, bearing His cross went forth: "and as they came out, they found a man of Cyrene, Simon by name; him they compelled to bear his cross" (Matt. 27:32).

His hands and His feet were to be pierced

—(Psa. 22:16); so, "when they were come to the place which is called Calvary, there they crucified him" (Luke 23:33).

He was to be numbered with the transgressors—(Is. 53:12); so, "with him they crucify two thieves; the one on his right hand, and the other on his left" (Mark 15:27).

He was to become a reproach to the people, and when they looked upon Him, they should shake their heads—(Psa. 109:25); so, "they that passed by reviled him, wagging their heads" (Matt. 27:39).

He was to be mocked for His trust in God: who should be challenged to deliver Him—(Psa. 22:8); so, "the chief priests mocking him, with the scribes and elders, said: He saved others; himself he cannot save. If he be the King of Israel, let him now come down from the cross, and we will believe him. He trusted in God; let him deliver him now, if he will have him: for he said, I am the Son of God. The thieves also, which were crucified with him, cast the same in his teeth" (Matt. 27:41-44).

The people were to look and to stare upon Him—(Psa. 22:17); so, "sitting down they watched him there" (Matt. 27:36).

His garments were to be parted among them, and for His vesture they were to cast lots—(Psa. 22:8); so, "the soldiers, when they had crucified Jesus, took his garments

and made four parts, to every soldier a part; and also his coat: now the coat was without seam, woven from the top throughout. They said therefore among themselves, Let us not rend it, but cast lots for it, whose it shall be'' (John 19:23, 24).

They were to give Him gall for His meat, and in His thirst they should give Him vinegar to drink—(Psa. 69:21); so, ''after this, Jesus knowing that all things were now accomplished, that the scripture might be fulfilled, saith, I thirst. Now there was set a vessel full of vinegar: and they filled a sponge with vinegar, and put it to his mouth'' (John 19:28, 29).

Into the hands of God He was to commend His spirit—(Psa. 31:5); so, ''when Jesus had cried with a loud voice, he said, Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit: and having said thus, he gave up the ghost'' (Luke 23:46).

His lovers and His friends should stand aloof from His sore, and His kinsmen should stand afar off—(Psa. 38:11); so, ''all his acquaintance, and the women that followed him from Galilee, stood afar off, beholding these things'' (Luke 23:49).

His bones were to be kept, not one of them should be broken—(Psa. 34:30); so, ''when they came to Jesus, and saw that he was dead already, they brake not his legs. For these things were done, that the scripture should be

fulfilled, A bone of him shall not be broken" (John 19:33, 36).

His heart was to be broken within Him—(Psa. 22:14); so, "one of the soldiers with a spear pierced his side, and forthwith came there out blood and water" (John 19:34).

The sun should be caused to go down at noon, and the earth be darkened on a clear day—(Amos 8:9); so, "from the sixth hour there was darkness over all the land unto the ninth hour" (Matt. 27:45).

He was to make His grave with the wicked, and be with the rich in His death—(Is. 53:9); so, "when the even was come, there came a rich man of Arimathæa, named Joseph, who also himself was Jesus' disciple: he went to Pilate, and begged the body of Jesus. Then Pilate commanded the body to be delivered. And when Joseph had taken the body, he wrapped it in a clean linen cloth, and laid it in his own new tomb, which he had hewn out in the rock: and he rolled a great stone to the door of the sepulchre, and departed" (Matt. 27:57-60).

These prophecies of His passion, given centuries before His birth, were beyond the intelligence of the prophets who uttered them, and not until these prophecies had been accomplished were they understood by the apostles. Prophets and apostles were alike looking forward to the coming of the Messiah of Glory, and they understood not the going

of the Messiah of Sorrow. Their eyes, which were filled with the light of the splendor of the kingdom, were veiled to the path of suffering that led to the throne. The Cross they ignored: the Glory they magnified. Fatally wrong were they, as fatally wrong as are they that now the Cross are magnifying, and the coming Glory depreciating. But we may not ignore either of these momentous facts, but we must exalt both of them, if the balance of truth is to be preserved by us. The Cross was necessary: it was the last and the lowest depth of humiliation: it was the meeting-place of love and of hate—there God's love meeting the raging passion of man's hatred: there mercy and righteousness being reconciled; and there God devising a way whereby He might bring back to Himself His banished ones. He could be just while He could justify the ungodly. On the Cross was shed the atoning blood: without such blood-shedding there could be for sinners no salvation; for Christ no crown; for Israel no kingdom; for earth no glory!

To Calvary—a word that stamps its meaning upon the whole scene—to Calvary, "the place of a skull"—the abode of death; the place of a skull—the marvelous but now dreary and desolated realm of man's thinking: to this scene of wreck, to this place of utter exhaustion of all of man's resources, to Calvary the Lord of Glory did go, and there,

in that suffocating market-place of Satan's slaves, the Lord of Glory the meaning of the word redemption transfigured forever. The market did He enter, the price did He pay, the bond-slaves did He free! How wonderful the transaction—His deepest sorrow transformed into His highest glory!

From the sixth hour to the ninth there lay upon the whole land a pall of darkness. The *sixth* hour may speak indeed of "the barrier-limit reached," and the *ninth* may be that of "perfected manifestation"; but the impenetrable darkness that lay between the two hours conceals the holy and the inscrutable mystery of substitutionary suffering in the accomplishing of the almighty redemption of sinners.

Now at the ninth hour the veil of the temple, the veil beyond which God had dwelt in shadow, was rent in twain from the top to the bottom: and God was in the light! And now for all men that draw near to Him in faith there is opened a way, to be closed never more, into the very presence and the glory of the Triune God.

It was "the blood of atonement" that, in the Levitical ceremonial, opened a way for the priests, the representatives of the people, through the veil—though only for a moment—into the presence of the Almighty. The veil, constantly hanging thus before God, opening only for the high priest, and for him alone,

on the Day of Atonement, and falling behind him as he thus passed through it, was characteristic of the Legal Dispensation. The veil was the witness that God dwelt, so far as man was concerned, in the thick darkness; yet that was but man's *thought:* for God is light, and ever in the light must dwell. The sin of man was the veil of darkness, most real, infinitely separating. Only by the Blood of Atonement, and by it alone, could a way be opened through that otherwise impenetrable and untraversable Sheol. And to this the ceaseless rivers of blood of the Levitical ordinances were but bearing the necessary witness. These sacrifices, repeated over and over, were ever pointing onward and forward to the one true One, who, laden with the sins that were not His own, should that darkness enter, and that darkness dispel forever. "The three hours of darkness were to Him the measure of what to any other would have been an infinite and hopeless distance. His cry of desertion interpreted the darkness. The veil rent from top to bottom proclaimed that it was traversed and removed."

In this wonderful work of redemption God was glorified in all of His attributes, and the light in which He dwelt shone out in a manner never again to be cast into gloom. Our great High Priest passed through the heavens, thus leaving the way open to His followers, who may all enter into the light now, and

who may all walk in the light with God now at this very moment, the blood cleansing them as they walk.

From Calvary the darkness is lifted, and the Cross is now in view, and the Cross remains for evermore to be the symbol of Christ's highest glory. To that Cross there was lifted, in the Person of our blessed Substitute, the burden of our sins, and on that Cross there was borne their penalty, and from the curse of our transgressions forever set free are we.

In that conflict there was none to help: the Son of God fought alone; He met the massed power of evil alone; He died alone.

At the last moment, when the tide of life is ebbing and the flood of death is approaching, the dying breath is but a whisper of failing strength, and over the loved one that is passing away we bend, to catch the last lowly spoken word, that we may hold it forever in the precious and indestructible memories of our dead.

But in no exhaustion of vital force, with no whispered word of weakness, did Jesus die; He cried with a loud voice—a cry of exultant triumph—and "dismissed his spirit." This victory-shout it was that impressed the Roman soldier that stood there and saw Him die. On the field of battle that grim warrior had seen men fall, but he never before had witnessed a falling like this. In human war-

fare death means defeat, but here death, in strange reversal of the nature of things, means victory. So then, the Son of God, the Saviour of the world, the Conqueror of evil, in death as in life triumphant, unbeaten, victorious, by dying vanquished death, routed the entrenched power of evil, conquered and confounded Satan, and overwhelmed him in hopeless and everlasting defeat. The conflict ended with the shout of the battlefield; and the Christ of God died, not in withered force but in unfading vigor, not with a moan of mortal pain but with a jubilant note of exultant joy, a pæan of victory, the cry of the Conqueror —*Tetelestai!* "It is finished." That cry, never before dared to be uttered at death's approach, has been now since then by how many human lips rung out, with never a weakening in one triumphal note!

Now that cry is the delivering-cry of the dying saint. For him, with his sin-stricken conscience under the Blood, the place of his refuge, that cry means peace with God, for it brings the peace of God. It is finished! The doors of heaven are opened wide! Sinners are welcomed home to God! That cry means through darkness light! through weakness strength! through defeat victory! through strife rest! through suffering gladness! through distance nighness! through death life! *Tetelestai!* The Messiah of Sorrow the Messiah of Glory IS.

CHAPTER XI

Resurrection

THE suffering is past, the sorrow is ended, the night is gone. Imperial soldiers that could not hold the bars of death cannot seal the gates of dawn. The light of the resurrection morning is breaking in the eastern sky. Calm and peaceful is the hour. The deep red band along the horizon is shaking out its golden fringe. The waters of the sea of Galilee are breaking softly along its shores. The clouds that wreathed the mount of Olives are slowly drifting up and away.

"Break forth into joy, sing together, ye waste places of Jerusalem: for the Lord hath comforted his people, He hath redeemed Jerusalem."

In the early twilight, long before the dawn has flushed the face of the sky, the women of Israel, under the burden of an unspeakable sorrow, make their way to the sepulchre of Jesus to anoint with their spices the body of their Lord and King. Nothing of those things that have come to pass do these women know, though the tremor of the earthquake they doubtless felt,* and the lightning-flash that scattered the Roman watch they may have seen. The angel of the Lord had de-

*"A *great* earthquake" (Matt. 28:2).

scended from heaven, and had rolled away the stone from the sepulchre, and this the women discover as they draw near. Angels are keeping guard over the sepulchre: its Tenant is gone. Mary Magdalene leaves the company, that she may find and tell Peter and John that the tomb is empty. She knows not that the Lord is risen; nor do the other women, who, after Mary's departure, enter into the sepulchre, and find not the body of the Lord Jesus. While perplexed about this, the women become conscious of the presence of the angels, and are affrighted, and bow down their faces to the earth. But the angels say unto them, "Why seek ye the living among the dead? He is not here, but is risen: remember how he spake unto you when he was yet in Galilee, saying, The Son of man must be delivered into the hands of sinful men, and be crucified, and the third day rise again. And they remembered his words, and returned from the sepulchre, and told all these things unto the eleven, and to all the rest."

Mary Magdalene, who had left the company before the angel's announcement, finds Peter and John, and she tells them that the Lord has been taken from the sepulchre, and that she knows not where they have laid Him. So the two disciples run both together, but John, swifter of foot, outruns Peter, and comes first to the sepulchre. And he, stooping down and

looking in, sees the linen clothes lying; yet he goes not in. Then cometh Simon Peter following him, and goeth into the sepulchre, and seeth the linen clothes lie, and the napkin, that was about His head, not lying with the linen clothes, but wrapped together in a place by itself. Peace and order prevailed, showing that there had been neither struggle nor haste. The "linen clothes" — *sindon,* in Greek—were a night-dress in which the body of the Lord had been enrobed for burial. There these lay, just as when wrapping the form of the Lord, angels guarding, one at the head, and the other at the feet, where the body of the Lord had lain. The linen clothes lay undisturbed, but from them the living Person had escaped. Without confusion, without disorder, without even the disarrangement of the grave-clothes, the material body of the Lord is gone!

The "napkin"—*soudarion,* in Greek, literally, "sweat-cloth"—that had covered the Lord's face, was folded; and lay in a place by itself. The superhuman work was done: the *soudarion* was no longer necessary. The *sindon,* in shape and form, remained unchanged: had not the *soudarion* been removed, the disciples would not have known that the body of the Lord was away.

The disciples are perplexed. They have no thought, no hope of resurrection; they know only that the sepulchre—save for the grave-

clothes lying there in order—is empty. The attendant angels they do not see, and, wondering at what it all may mean, they depart, and return to their own home.

Mary Magdalene—or Mary of Magdala—returns to the sepulchre, and there arrives after the two disciples are gone.

Mary means—"exalted"; and Magdala,—"watch-tower": and Mary, exalted in her watch-tower, is the first to behold, and to be transfigured by, the light of the resurrection morning.

She is alone, and weeping; alone with those indestructible memories that neither death nor sorrow can shatter, her eyes riveted on the spot where last she had seen the body of her Lord. Even the angels that are in silent contemplation there, the one at the head, and the other at the feet, where the body of the Lord had lain, are without light or luster to relieve the darkness that has benighted Mary. With a broken heart is she there, crushed and depressed in spirit, desolate and in despair. Absorbed in her sorrow she is utterly unconscious of the angels' presence. What are angels to her? The body of her Lord gone! With Him her heart lay buried! Without resource are the angels to minister to those whose faith through grief has failed. From such depth of despair the hand of the Lord alone may lift His own.

Mary, peering into the sepulchre, her eyes

filled with tears, is indifferent to the angels, and unconscious also is she of the presence of One that has come near and is now standing behind her. Yet, by the invisible attraction of His unique glory, she turns instinctively; but she is too far gone in sorrow to be at once recalled. The voice that repeats the angel's question may be, for aught she knows, the voice of the gardener, but in yearning grief she pleads, "Sir, if thou hast borne him hence, tell me where thou hast laid him, and I"—weak though I be, in love's strength—"will take him away."

She seems to take it for granted that the gardener—yea, that every one—must know *whom* she seeks. But she seeks the Living among the dead, and there she cannot find Him. "Jesus saith unto her, Mary!" The voice that had set her free from the sevenfold power of Satan! She hears it, and through her soul once more it thrills, and, with a passionate outburst of joy, she claims Him, saying, "Rabboni"—my Master! Mary is comforted; her night has gone; her morning is come; she has found her Lord. He tells her of the new relationship now existing with her, and with all His brethren, a relationship that is never more to be shadowed by sorrow, never more to be darkened by death.

This new relationship, sustained in resurrection, abides; and to proclaim this Jesus

sends Mary forth, while He Himself goes to lift the burden from the hearts of the other women that had gone with their message to His disciples. Where, or under what circumstances, the Lord finds them we are not told, but with the ordinary salutation He greets them—All hail! But to that salutation, uttered by Him that morning, there is given a new meaning, and it is one in which there is quivering a note of joy that has sounded forth in every Christian salutation since.

The Lord in lowly grace next reveals Himself to Peter. Of this meeting there is nowhere an account given. It is a personal ministry that Peter, the failed disciple, needs; and this he needs before he can take his place in fellowship among the other disciples.

After His meeting with Peter, the Lord joins the two men on their sorrowful walk to Emmaus. These two men, of whom we now hear for the first time and of whom we shall hear no more, have left behind them the city of Jerusalem, in whose redemption their hope had been centered. As they journey they talk of the strange things that have come to pass. Their eyes are "holden"—a sign of the spiritual darkness in which they are groping—so that when Jesus joins them they know Him not. In answer to His questions they tell to Him their tale of doubt and trouble. They tell Him of Jesus, of His life, and of His

death, and of their perished hope; of the women's visit to the sepulchre, of their report of the empty tomb, and of the vision of angels: and all this had seemed to them like an idle tale; yea, other of the disciples had gone to the sepulchre, and had found it empty: what to make of it all, they did not know.

The Messianic hope that was centered in Jesus had with His death expired. This is evident from the despairing words—"We trusted that it had been he which should have redeemed Israel."

For cherishing a hope that had now vanished Jesus does not censure them, but for their slowness of heart to believe all that the prophets had written He does reprove them, and then, unrolling before them the scroll of their sacred writings, He expounds to them in all the Scriptures the things concerning Himself. The hearts of the men burn within them while the wondrous Stranger opens and explains the prophetic burden of the ages past, showing how necessary it was for the Messiah to suffer before He could enter into His glory. Rekindled at that sacred fire, their Messianic hope revives, and at Emmaus, the day being far spent, they constrain Jesus, who made as if He would have gone further, to abide with them. This He does, and in the breaking of bread—the symbol of His body broken, of truth broken and

distributed—His glory shines out. The men see it, and know Him, and He is gone!

Before revealing Himself to them He had shown, and fully demonstrated from Scripture, that by the path only of suffering could the Messiah ascend to glory. The men, their hearts still burning within them, rise up the same hour, and return to Jerusalem, there to have their faith confirmed by the testimony of the eleven that the Lord was risen and had appeared to Peter.

On the evening of this same day, while the disciples are assembled together, the doors being shut for fear of the Jews, Jesus appears among them, and once more, as on the road to Emmaus, He shows from Scripture that the Messiah must suffer in order to enter into His glory: that He had died, but was alive for evermore.

Except for the Lord's resurrection, the essential and fundamental truth of Revelation, the body of Scripture would be a dead, inert mass of inherent and incoherent contradictions. Scripture affirms His resurrection, and by His resurrection Scripture is confirmed. Nor is this reasoning in a circle, as reflection will show that Resurrection and Revelation must stand or fall together. Personal testimony to the resurrection of our Lord is not a necessity: no such collateral proof does Scripture need. Our Lord's resurrection, apart from any testimony that may be ad-

duced from those that saw Him after His passion, is an indisputable deduction from the logic of Scripture—and there is no conclusion so conclusive as the inexorable conclusion of logic. Eye witnesses, to prove the resurrection of Christ, are not necessary; for the Spirit of God has so constructed the logic of Scripture that if a man believe not Moses and the prophets, neither will he believe though one rose from the dead. The believer's conviction of the Lord's resurrection hangs on the personal testimony of none—whether of the women, or of the eleven, or of Cephas, or of James, or of Paul, or of the five hundred brethren: the demonstration of Scripture is thorough and satisfactory, and it needs no collateral nor corroborative evidence.

With the resurrection of Christ the Messianic hope that had expired with His death revived. This hope, cleared of the misconceptions that had clouded it, shines out, after the resurrection, like a star, and, with ever brightening luster, it is to shine through the long night of the Lord's rejection. This hope became with the apostles the theme of impassioned speech and of inspired epistle.

If Israel's national hope were unfounded, if it were never to be realized; or, if it were a hope that was to be realized in the salvation of sinners, with no national restoration of Israel, no reëstablishment of David's king-

dom and throne, it would be difficult, if not altogether impossible, to account for the Lord's leaving the disciples under such a delusion. Their question, just before His ascension, shows with what tense and eager expectancy they still clung to the Messianic hope. "Lord," they say, "wilt thou at this time restore again the kingdom to Israel?" Why, if their hope were illusory, did the Lord leave them with such delusion? For forty days He had been instructing them in things pertaining to the kingdom of God. Is it conceivable that He would leave them "obsessed with a false notion" that would require centuries to unravel and set right? Not a word of reproof is to be found in His answer, nor the slightest intimation that their hope was a delusion and a dream: on the contrary, He confirms their hope by telling them that it was not for them "to know the times or the seasons, which the Father hath put in his own power." If these words do not confirm their hope, then language is past the possibility of intelligible construction. The kingdom was to be restored, and, if this be not directly expressed, it is in all certainty implied in the statement that the times and seasons had not been revealed. Secret things belong to the Lord our God. He was about to root Israel out of their land in His anger, and in wrath, and in great indignation. The "times and the seasons" of

their restoration were hidden in the counsels of God. There they remain to this day.

The setting aside of Israel was, we may be assured, no unforeseen contingency, but was something that had its place in the ordered counsels of eternity. The secrets of these ordered counsels are hidden. To us and to our children belong the things only that are revealed. Among the things now revealed there is nothing more conspicuously outstanding than the certainty of the coming of Christ's kingdom in power and glory. The time is unknown; but the blessed fact is as definite and sure as language can make it.

Jehovah hath measured the waters in the hollow of His hand, and hath meted out heaven with a span, and hath comprehended the dust of the earth in a measure, and hath weighed the mountains in scales, and the hills in a balance; and He alone hath ordained, and He alone knoweth the times and the seasons that shall bring into perfected manifestation His plan of the ages.

These ages are to come to their consummation in Imperialism and Christ. To this infinitely glorious achievement and end the cycles of eternity are rolling. To this consummation all the ages and all their activities are making their contribution. The present Age of Grace is under tribute, and it, with all other ages, must render its account.

This present Age, under Paul's inspired

stylus, unrolls to the music of one majestic confessional chant:

"In human form was Messiah revealed:
By Spirit-power was He proved the Just One:
To angels He appeared:
Among Gentiles was He proclaimed:
In the world was He by faith accepted:
In glory was He received up into heaven."*

God was manifest in the flesh—The Incarnation; justified in the Spirit—The Resurrection; seen of angels — The Ascension; preached unto the Gentiles—The Passing of Judaism; believed on in the world—The Constitution of the Church; received up into glory—The Blessed Hope of the Believer.

Such is the present Age of Grace. When it shall have swept through its majestic cycle, when it shall have finished its course, when the Church, the body of Christ, shall have been formed: then, and not till then, shall the Kingdom-Age, the Age of Glory, be ushered in. Then, and not till then, shall be shown plainly and with certainty that Christ was raised from the dead to sit on David's throne.

**The Letters of St. Paul*, Arthur S. Way.

CHAPTER XII

Superexaltation

THE Lord is risen. He has shown Himself alive after His passion by many infallible proofs. He has spoken about the things pertaining to the Kingdom of God. He has given to His disciples their final instructions. The set time of His exaltation is now come.

"And He led them out as far as to Bethany, and He lifted up His hands, and blessed them. And it came to pass, while He blessed them, He was parted from them, and carried up into heaven.

"And while they looked steadfastly toward heaven as He went up, behold, two men stood by them in white apparel; which also said, Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing up into heaven? This same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen Him go into heaven.

"And they returned to Jerusalem with great joy: and were continually in the temple, praising and blessing God."

This was their drafting into actual and active service; this was the receiving of their commission; this was their knightly accolade of inauguration. In His name they were to be the present representatives of their absent

Lord. They were to disciple all nations, baptizing them into the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.

For the proper discharge of their embassy, the disciples were to be equipped and empowered by the Holy Spirit, a Gift that was contingent upon the glorification of Jesus: and now Jesus was exalted and glorified. The disciples had seen Him, the same Jesus that they had known always; they had seen Him ascend bodily into heaven. This divine beatification had filled them with adoring wonder, and they bowed the knee and worshiped.

The Lord Jesus Christ, in the full dignity of His Person inviolate and inviolable, rose from the dead, clothed in the identical body that had been nailed to the Cross. Inscrutable though this fact be, yet no other conclusion is at all possible from a fair reading of the Sacred narrative. Jesus, in resurrection, was resiant in a body material, physical and palpable. The presupposition of an asomatous and solely-spiritual resurrection of Him is a mere speculation, and is one that is at issue with, and subversive of, the teaching of Scripture. Jesus of Nazareth, that ascended from the mount of Olives, was the very same Jesus that journeyed from Bethlehem to Calvary, and it is this same Jesus that is to return from heaven in like manner as the disciples saw Him go into heaven. It is this same Jesus, and no other, that, in hu-

manity glorified, the Representative Head of a redeemed people, is now sitting at the right hand of the Majesty on High. In literal and veritable Manhood Jesus has passed through the heavens, and in literal and veritable Manhood He is now in the presence of God. And this is not more mysterious than that Enoch and Elijah are both there, each of them having been taken up without dying into heaven; and in heaven they now are in bodies glorified but palpable. And this is not more incredible than that we all in bodies, transfigured but substantial, shall appear in resurrection before God.

The forty-fourth verse of the fifteenth chapter of First Corinthians, when it teaches resurrection, does not teach an incorporeal one. The "natural body"—*soma psuchikon*—is a soul-governed body: the "spiritual body"—*soma pneumatikon*—is a spirit-governed body. The former, such a body as we have now; the latter, such a body as we shall have in resurrection then. Both bodies are real and corporeal: the one, the present body, controlled by the passions and appetites; the other, the future body, dominated by the intelligence and will. The two bodies, also, are identical: at the Coming of the Lord, the "natural body" being transfigured into the "spiritual body."

The body that is buried in the ground is the identical body that is raised out of death, nor

is the identity of the body affected at all by its transfiguration when raised in redemption. The dead in Christ are, at His coming again, to be raised with bodies incorruptible, and the living saints, at the same Appearing, are to be caught up in bodies immortal.

"In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed. For this corruptible [the apostle is speaking of the dead] must put on incorruption, and this mortal [the apostle is speaking of the living] must put on immortality. So when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory."

The present glorified body of the Man Christ Jesus is the archetype and matrix of the future transfigured body of the saint.

"Our citizenship is in heaven; from whence also we wait for a Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ: who shall fashion anew the body of our humiliation, that it may be conformed to the body of His glory."

And He, clothed in the body of His glory, is now exalted to the right hand of God. A glorified Man—unique, indeed, in His glory—is now filling the throne of the Universe: a glorified Man, upholding all things by the word of His power! A wondrous theophany

this—In Him God came down to man: in Him man has gone up to God. In Him God and man are united in indissoluble perfection, now and for evermore.

From the highest heights the Lord of Glory, the eternal Son of the eternal Father, descended to the lowest depths, in order that the love and grace of God might be to sinners shown: the Son's humiliation and the Father's love both finding their fullest and sweetest expression in that death upon the transom of the cursed Tree.

"Wherefore also God highly exalted him, and gave to him the name which is above every name: that in the name of Jesus"—his name human—"every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things on earth, and things under the earth; and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father" (Phil. 2:9-11).

This exaltation, then, is of Jesus in His humanity. Of Jesus in His deity there could be no exaltation, for to a place higher than the one essentially and eternally His own, He cannot be raised. The amazing fact in the exaltation of Him is not that He in deity returned to the glory that He had with the Father before the world was: this no one denies; but the more marvelous thing is, that in humanity He has returned to God, and He, the representative of His redeemed people,

thereby has exalted them to this high place in glory. This wonderful and precious truth is confirmed by every post-ascension revelation and post-ascension testimony. The exultant note is that Jesus of Nazareth, despised and rejected on earth, is filling the highest place in glory.

Listen to Peter on the Day of Pentecost declaring that Jehovah, Who, through Joel His prophet, had promised to pour out of His Spirit in the last days upon all flesh, was none other than Jesus of Nazareth, who, having been raised from the dead, and "being by the right hand of God exalted, and having received of the Father the promise of the Holy Ghost, hath shed forth this"—the things they had seen and heard! Peter is exulting in the fact that the very same Jesus that had stood on the shores of Gennesaret, that had one day long ago called him from his fishing-nets, was now in sovereign authority filling the throne in heaven. In triumphant joy Peter refers, in every term of reproach that he can summon, to the contumely suffered by Jesus on earth: how He was set at nought, betrayed, delivered up, denied, taken, with wicked hands crucified and slain. On such cumulative language there is no restraint. Glorying is the speaker in Jesus of Nazareth, Him who has been exalted to the highest heavens, of whose Person the real dignity is now for the first time filling His apostle's consciousness.

He seems even jubilant over the scorn and contempt that had been shown to Jesus on earth, as if the place of shame were but the black velvet on which the unspeakably precious jewels of Christ's glorified state shone like a heaven of stars in the windows of time. See how his throat seems to throb like a singing bird's as he proclaims the fact that a Man in heaven is David's Lord, the Heir of the kingdom that had been promised to Jesse's son! The fact that this glorified Man is none other than the lowly and despised Nazarene: this is all Peter's theme on the Day of Pentecost; and this is all Peter's theme thereafter.

The Superexaltation of Jesus is avouched and maintained in the one hundred and tenth Psalm, and this Psalm, indeed, does not escape the memory of Peter, who cites it in evidence. It was commonly accepted as Davidic and Messianic; so was it accepted by the Lord; so was it accepted by the apostles; and on this multifold testimony our own inductive conclusion may rest securely. To the primacy and preëminence of Jesus does this Psalm witness. Jesus of Nazareth, whom David in Spirit called Lord, surpassing all others in excellence, has into Melchisedec priesthood been inducted, and with sacerdotal dignity at the right hand of God is enthroned. In Manhood this Jesus of Nazareth has been exalted to yonder royal and regnant priesthood—a Priest upon a throne; and the sceptered hand

discharges now all the functions of this priesthood, and the same sceptered hand shall hold and control and minister to the needs of men in the Kingdom-Age now rapidly nearing—a truth of far-reaching significance, and one that is clearly and forcibly stated in Scripture:

"Behold the man whose name is the BRANCH, and he shall grow up out of his place, and he shall build the temple of the Lord: even he shall build the temple of the Lord; and he shall bear the glory, and shall sit and rule upon his throne; and he shall be a priest upon his throne: and the counsel of peace shall be between them both" (Zech. 6: 12, 13).

This Lord Jesus Christ, then, in His essential, personal, official and acquired glories, in the indiscerptible union of His two natures, divine and human, is now, and evermore shall be, in the Godhead—*supreme and highest position:* above which there is no possible place of exaltation, for when He had by Himself (in Manhood) purged our sins, He sat down on the right hand of God, there saluted of God—"High priest forever, after the order of Melchisedec." At the right hand of the Majesty on High, Jesus, after His atoning work, sat down, "being made so much better than the angels, as he hath by inheritance obtained a more excellent name than they."

In deity He was the Creator of the angels;

only in humanity can it be said of Him that He has obtained a more excellent name than the angels. The Son of man, the representative Head of the redeemed, has passed through the heavens, and He is now filling the highest place in glory. To this Superexaltation does Peter bear witness. So likewise does Stephen. Peter declares Him to be *in* heaven: Stephen *sees* Him there.

The wrath of the council is surging all around Stephen like the waves of an angry sea. "But he, being full of the Holy Ghost, looked up steadfastly into heaven, and saw the glory of God, and Jesus"—again the name human—"standing on the right hand of God, and said, Behold, I see the heavens opened, and the Son of man"—His Messianic title—"standing on the right hand of God."

Could any man, apart from the divine inspiration, have projected a scene like that, or even conceived it? No. Then think of this statement of Paul's: "Now that he ascended, what is it but that he also descended first into the lower parts of the earth? he that descended is the same also that ascended up far above all heavens, that he might fill all things" (Eph. 4:9, 10). Could mortal mind have devised a reach of thought like that?

The Glory of the Father; the Babe of Bethlehem; the Cross of Calvary; the Throne of the Majesty in the Highest: these are the wondrous sectors in that indiscerptible

cycle of glory, each emitting the uncreated light till the very universe is ablaze with the Theophany.

"The Spirit"—to use here another's language—"had revealed the God of glory in the Babe of Bethlehem, and now, when all power and grace is ministered from heaven, the shedding forth of the Holy Ghost, the healing of the sorrows of the children of men, the salvation of sinners, the promise of the days of refreshing and restitution—all is found and declared to be in and from the Man glorified in heaven."

As to Stephen, there comes to Paul the vision, and he hears a voice from the glory: "Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me? And he said, Who art thou, Lord? And the Lord said, I am Jesus"—once again the name human—"whom thou persecutest." And now there flashes on the mind of Paul, like a sudden burst of light, the disclosure that Jesus—O breath-catching belief!—an impostor, in Paul's first thoughts, a seditious pretender whose followers he was commissioned to hale off to prison, is resplendent with glory, is exalted to the skies! This Jesus, instead of being dead, as the man that saw not till he was made blind supposed, is still alive. He is revealing Himself to the apostle who, because of this very vision, afterwards declares himself to have been an eye-witness of the resurrection. Led by the hand—for the blaze

of glory has curtained Paul's eyes—shambling and shuffling into Damascus, to him comes Ananias and says: "Brother Saul, the Lord, even Jesus"—as if to accentuate the name human—"that appeared unto thee in the way as thou camest, hath sent me, that thou mightest receive thy sight, and be filled with the Holy Ghost."

Here it is evident that, with Peter and Stephen, Paul and Ananias both believe that the same Jesus that had lived and suffered and died upon earth is alive again up in heaven. These men have no thought of a resurrection of Jesus only in spirit; these men conceive of Jesus in resurrection as the very same Jesus that upon earth had been known among their own kith and kin. This Jesus, and no other than this Jesus, is superexalted, enthroned in glory, at the right hand of God; and this is the blessed and soul-thrilling doctrine that Paul preaches, however such preaching of his may now seem to be unreasonable and foolish.

At Athens, the metropolis of the world's wisdom, the university of men's culture, the city beautiful because of its statues and temples and theatres, the city intellectually renowned because of its dramatists, orators, philosophers and poets, "the ugly little Jew" —as Renan describes Paul—becomes tall as the stars, and beauteous as Hyperion, as he declares that God "hath appointed a day in

which he will judge the world in righteousness by that man''—a representative of the human race—''whom he hath ordained; whereof he hath given assurance unto all men, in that he hath raised him from the dead'' (Acts 17:31).

To sum up, in conclusion:

A spiritual resurrection of Christ, a Christ raised only in spirit and without a material body—for which no shadow of a shade of evidence can be adduced from Scripture—would, if it were true, deprive us of the unspeakable comfort that we get in the assurance that the very same Jesus that lived upon the earth is now seated on the throne of God in heaven. In the body now glorified, the Person is the same; the same yesterday, and to-day, and forever.

It is He that traveled the earth in veritable human nature, that blessed the multitudes, that cleansed the leper, that healed the sick, that gave sight to the blind, that caused the deaf to hear, that made the lame to leap and walk, that cast out demons, that received publicans and sinners, that blessed little children, that comforted the sorrowing, that raised the dead. It is He that turned the water into wine, that stilled the tempest, that walked on the sea, that was transfigured on the mountain; it is He that was born of a virgin, that had not where to lay His head, that was assailed by Satan, that spent whole nights in

prayer, that suffered weariness and hunger and thirst, that was in all points tempted like as we are, yet apart from sin; it is He that was bowed under the weight of woe in the garden, that was by the Jews betrayed and tried and condemned, that was by the Gentiles mocked and scourged, that was, by Jew and Gentile combined, lifted to the cross of shame; it is He that rose in victory over death, that ascended to glory from the mount of Olives; it is He that now—Hallelujah!—in the unity of His Person and the inseverable union of His Natures, is superexalted to the Father's very throne, and there ever liveth to make intercession for us. Thus has our own humanity in Jesus been taken up to God, and there does our own humanity abide in grace unchangeable and in glory ineffable.

In the Apocalypse the veil is once more lifted, and for the last time till He come.

"The Son of man,"—His Messianic title—standing in the midst of the golden lampstands, declares Himself, saying, "I am he that liveth, and was dead; and, behold, I am alive for evermore, Amen; and have the keys of hell and of death" (Rev. 1:18). Plenipotent is He to bring to a consummation His own Imperialism that in the Apocalypse is unveiled.

His last words are the loving renewal of His unbreakable troth to Israel, and to the

Church: His holy engagement from which He seeks no release.

"I Jesus"—the name familiar, and unspeakably precious to how many!—"I Jesus have sent mine angel to testify unto you these things in the churches. I am the root and the offspring of David, and the bright, the morning star."

Behold, then, the solemn and final ratification of both covenants. As "the root and the offspring of David" He comes to establish the Kingdom: as "the bright, the morning star" He comes to receive the Church.

Jesus is coming! Coming again! The same Jesus that lived and died and rose again! His face we shall see! His voice we shall hear! His people we shall be! He our God, we His own children! We shall sorrow never more; and there shall be no more death, neither shall there be any more pain: for to living fountains of waters shall the redeemed be led, and from their eyes God shall wipe away their every tear!

Even so, Come, Lord Jesus.

CHAPTER XIII

The Kingdom

THE kingdom promised to the Messiah is delineated so plainly by the Hebrew prophets that any misunderstanding about it is impossible without a perversion of their language. To establish forever the seed of David, and to build up his throne to all generations,—this God has bound Himself by covenant and oath to do. Interpreting the terms of this covenant in a spiritual significance is a violence perpetrated on plain speech, and such forcing of words is due to the attempts of expositors to harmonize on all fours the facts of history with the predictions of prophecy. The prophets had no conception of the kingdom other than that conveyed by the literal sense of the words in which they defined it. They looked forward —and they encouraged the people to do the same—to the coming of the Messiah, when, as the Son of David, He should be crowned King of Israel, with Jerusalem as the capital of His kingdom. This is what the prophets predicted, and, irrespective of what took place after the Messiah's coming, this is what the people were looking forward to with eager expectancy. Whether they were right or whether they were wrong is not a matter

of speculation, but whether they were right or whether they were wrong is something that must be determined by Scripture alone.

Gabriel's words to the Virgin—"He shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the Highest: and the Lord God shall give unto him the throne of his father David: and he shall reign over the house of Jacob for ever; and of his kingdom there shall be no end"—were the confirmation of the prophetic voices of the ages past, for the Virgin's Son was unquestionably the promised Messiah.

The kingdom proclaimed by John the Baptist was the kingdom by the prophets foretold and the kingdom by Gabriel announced. Misunderstanding of this is impossible without a perversion of the words of the very definition of the kingdom. Not now are we concerned with the consequences that followed the nation's rejection of the Messiah, but here we are simply considering the kind of a kingdom that the Jews had a perfect and undeniable right to expect when, in fulfilment of prophecy, the kingdom should be established under the sway of the Messiah. Messianic hope, intense and passionate, was surging through the veins of the people like a tide at the flood, and that hope, however carnal or unspiritual we may judge it to have been, was nevertheless one that had been by the prophets inspired. Nor could these prophets have been mistaken,

for they were holy men of God, speaking as they were moved by the Holy Ghost. More than that, it is impossible to conceive how the nation's rejection of the Messiah could have discredited the testimony of these inspired men; and yet, the traditional view that would substitute a spiritual kingdom for the temporal kingdom promised to David and his seed would do this very thing: it would discredit and would put the bar sinister on the escutcheon of God's own heralds prepared and sent.

Into this world was Christ born with exclusive title to the throne He had come to establish. Offer Himself did He in good faith to the nation. Had the nation accepted Him, the kingdom, without a peradventure, would have been set up, and set up in conformity with the terms of the prophet's predictions. But a misunderstanding of the righteous and moral character of the kingdom, though not of its glory and extent, led to the refusal of the Messiah, and this refusal on the part of the nation was the expression full and final of the abounding iniquity that could be purged away only by the vicarious suffering of the Son of God; and that purged away must be, before the kingdom in righteousness could be set up and established upon the earth.

The two men in their walk to Emmaus are gently reproved by Christ for their slowness to perceive the imperative necessity of the

suffering that must go before the glory. If the nation's rejection of Him lay in His way as an obstacle to the throne, so also did the cross lie in His way as the only means by which that obstacle to the throne could be removed. The nation's rejection and the national hope can find at the cross their only possible reconciliation. The rejection, in fact, confirms their hope: so here, as everywhere where sin is abounding, grace is abounding much more, that as sin hath reigned unto death, even so might grace reign through righteousness unto eternal life by Jesus Christ our Lord. But see what a marvelous conception of the infinite glory underlying the national rejection of Jesus there lay in the mind of Paul the apostle! Had the Israelites stumbled to their falling away forever? God forbid: but rather through their fall there had come salvation unto the Gentiles, for to provoke the Jews to jealousy. Furthermore, the fall of them was to be the riches of the world, and the diminishing of them was to be the enlarging and the enriching of the Gentiles: so that, indeed, the whole matter is a question as to the measure of the glory that is to follow Israel's restoration to favor!

Jesus, by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, was taken, and by wicked hands was crucified and slain; but from the dead He was raised—as Peter on the day of Pentecost declares that He was—in order to

sit on David's throne, thereby honoring the covenant and confirming the oath of God.

The Lord's present office in Melchisedec priesthood at the right hand of God is, as the one hundred and tenth Psalm affirms, preliminary only to His taking of the throne. He has been "saluted" of God—not "called," as in the common version, nor even "named," as in the revised version, but "saluted"—a high priest forever after the order of Melchisedec, a priest upon a throne; but a throne not His own as yet, for the throne upon which He is seated now is not His own, as is made evident by the words—"To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me in my throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with my Father in his throne" (Rev. 3:21).

The Messiah's throne, which is Christ's throne, is guaranteed to Him by covenant and oath, and that Messianic throne has not been set up yet! The distinction of His throne from that of the Father's is a distinction that marks a vital difference.

In one of the parables, evoked by the notion that the kingdom was to appear immediately, the Lord represents Himself as a nobleman going into a far country to receive for Himself a kingdom, but intending to return. Before his going, the nobleman calls in his ten servants and delivers to them ten pounds, saying, Occupy till I come. But his citizens

hated him, and sent a message after him, saying, We will not have this man to reign over us.

The nobleman at length does receive the kingdom, and is come back. The servants to whom he had delivered the pounds for trading are called to an accounting, and then the rebels that sent after him the defiant message are taken and put to death.

This parable, like many other of the kingdom-parables, contemplates the entire period between the departure of the King and His return. Its application, therefore, so far as it relates to the King's return and what takes place then, is still in the future; for the King has not returned yet. But there can be no doubt of its meaning. The Lord, leaving His interests in the hands of His disciples, ascended from the mount of Olives into heaven. These disciples are to trade with the Lord's money till He comes again. But the Jewish ecclesiastical leaders, representing the nation, rejected Peter's testimony on the day of Pentecost, they rejected him and his message afterwards in the temple, they rejected Stephen, and stoned him to death, and sent him after the King with their fiat of rebellion. Then, up there in heaven, where Jesus was standing at the right hand of God, there was an official action of extraordinary solemnity: the consecration of Christ to His office of royal priesthood. While upon earth the

stones were hurtling round Stephen, in heaven his Lord and Master was standing at the right hand of God, and in answer to earth's fiat of hate and rebellion, Jehovah "saluted" Jesus—thus and thereby inducting Him into the office of Melchisedec priesthood—and, at the same time, saying, "Sit thou at my right hand until I make thine enemies thy footstool." Then it was that Christ sat down, and sat down in the throne of the Father, and there in that throne the King rejected by His people is sitting now, and there He is to remain until His enemies are all to Him made subject.

The servants to whom were entrusted the pounds represent those that are responsible for the King's interest during His absence. With His money they are trading—principal, interest, and all increment by the grace of the King credited to their account, and not to His. Yes, for nearly two thousand years they have been trading with their Lord's money, and the day for their accounting is not come yet. But come it will, and for the discharge of our trust, account must we.

The servants are not commanded to bring in and to establish the kingdom; they are to "occupy" till the King comes, when into their fidelity He will inquire, upon His enemies execute judgment, and Himself establish the kingdom.

The Church, positively obsessed with the

thought that she is this kingdom and none other, is attempting an impossible task, that of producing on earth kingdom-conditions. This can never be accomplished but by the King alone, and this assertion Scripture everywhere and in every way confirms. The grand finale is to come from no gradual extension of the Church as a system, nor even from the spread of her doctrines, but from a decisive act of the Lord Jesus Christ, sudden and swift, in power and in judgment. This is affirmed in the most positive terms by the one hundred and tenth Psalm, and this is the concurrent testimony of predictive prophecy.

The second Psalm, which—like the one hundred and tenth—is Davidic and Messianic both, shows very clearly the manner in which the kingdom is to be introduced. The Gentiles may rage, and the Jews may imagine a vain thing; the kings of the earth may set themselves, and the rulers take counsel together, against Jehovah and against His Messiah—and this they will do, and, as this they attempt to do, they will impotently say, "Let us break their bands asunder, and cast away their cords from us"; but "He that sitteth in the heavens shall laugh: the Lord shall have them in derision." Do these doomed rebels believe they can break a lance with God? In their escalade have they ladders wherewith to mount to the ramparts of heaven? Do they imagine that they can de-

throne heaven's King? Let them listen to Jehovah's answer—"Yet have I set my king upon my holy hill of Zion." Hallelujah!

Question we may not the future glory and absolute sovereignty of Messiah's reign without questioning the word of Jehovah, for it is Himself that proclaims it. Whether it be a literal Zion or a spiritual Zion is not now the query, though, as to this distinction also, Scripture is perfectly clear. The point now to be pressed is that in the second Psalm there is solemnly pledged to Jesus an Absolutism—an Imperialism—that has never been made good to Him yet, no, neither in a kingdom spiritual nor in a kingdom temporal. Jesus has but to *ask*—so the Psalm reads—and Jehovah will give to Him the Gentiles for His inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for His possession. Nor are we left in doubt as to the manner in which this Imperialism is to be set up and established. The Messiah is to break down all opposition with a rod of iron, and He is to dash His enemies to pieces like a potter's vessel—by that cataclysmic action introducing the kingdom in a manner far different from the evolutionary one of common speculation.

This Messiah is neither the "War-God" of the Jews, nor "the Christ" of man's speculative thought, no, He is the Christ of God, the Christ of Scripture. A Messiah, irresistible, regnant, triumphant, is the one burden of all

the prophets, for this burden is not one with exceptions, but is uniform, unvarying, concurrent and insistent.

The kingdom, though not yet established in power, is here—and we all admit it—here in some sense. But in what sense is the kingdom here? In the first place it is here *territorially:* because the uttermost parts of the earth have been promised to Christ for His possession; and when, at the consummation, the seventh angel sounds, great voices are heard in heaven, saying, "The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord, and of his Christ; and he shall reign for ever and ever." In the Greek, confirmed by the revised version, it is—"The world-kingdom of our Lord and of his Christ has come."

In one of the kingdom-parables the "field" is declared to be the world, and, for the sake of the treasure hid in it, the field is bought. Now then, we all expect—however we may differ as to process—that the whole world is to become subject to Christ eventually: so that it is possible, at least in a territorial sense, to say that the kingdom is here already. In this sense, though, it has been here always; but there is an addition logically to this thought. The term kingdom connotes more than geographical territory: the precise definition of kingdom must include and denote a Ruler, a Seat of Government, and a People. There is, of course, no question as to

the Ruler of the Messianic kingdom, nor—if Scripture is followed—is there uncertainty about the Seat of Government, nor doubt about the identity of the People to be ruled. The King of the Messianic kingdom is Christ; the royal metropolis, mount Zion; the people, Israel. These identities cannot be disclaimed without violence to Scripture, though a fatal persistency in misapplying them is evident among certain interpreters that object to what they are pleased to call a "hard and exacting literalism." But if this literal construction were in its nature impossible or inconceivable, the spiritual construction (which has after all its place, and a very important one) would be the only method of interpretation feasible: but the literal construction is by no means contrary to reason nor is it beyond the bounds of reason, and from the literal construction there should be no deviation, not one footstep of departure, save in those passages in which the spiritual significance is obviously intended.

Christ was a King in the literal sense of that word: He was rejected literally, and put to death literally, by a people that were actual and literal; and yet the literal kingdom foretold by the prophets was never established upon this earth. What did take place did not, however, discredit the prophets; for the thing that was done was the very thing that was predicted to be done, predicted precisely,

though it is true that the inspired seers were in perplexity and confusion of thought about the sufferings of Christ, and the glory that should follow.

The King came unto His own—the people of Israel—and His own received Him not: but as many as received Him, to them gave He authority to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on His name. In these words there is neither indication, nor is there implication, of the kingdom's being established, though they that received Christ were in the kingdom territorially, and were by new birth constituted sons and heirs-at-law of the kingdom. The King, by the nation rejected, was received up into glory, to become eventually, by an act of power smiting down all opposition, invested with kingdom-authority. In the meanwhile, during the King's absence, the kingdom in its territorial character is left for its administration in the hands of men. In this form the kingdom is in existence now, and further—as the kingdom-parables show—the kingdom is in a mixed condition of good and evil. The wheat and the tares are growing together in the field, nor is there to be any separation of these before the end of the age, when the tares are to be bound in bundles for burning, and the wheat is to be gathered into the barn for the All Hail! of the harvest home.

Despite this admixture of good and evil,

the moral and spiritual character of the kingdom itself may no longer be misunderstood. It is a kingdom of truth, of righteousness, of peace: its governing principles—those enunciated in the Sermon on the Mount. These moral features are denoted in Paul's declaration that "the kingdom of God is not meat and drink; but righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost" (Rom. 14:17).

Into the kingdom so instituted and so governed none can enter unless they be born from above. Mere external righteousness, such as that of the scribes and Pharisees, constitutes no claim at all, and except their righteousness be exceeded none may even see the kingdom of God. Title to entrance into the kingdom is conferred through regeneration alone, and this is to be the test in the day of the kingdom's purging. Provisionally, before the kingdom is set up in power, it is possible to be *in* it, yet not *of* it—the wheat and the tares alike within it and growing up together; and in this phenomenon we have present one of the kingdom's "mysteries."

But, whether the kingdom be viewed territorially, or whether it be viewed in its moral features, it is not come yet! For its coming we pray; for its extension we labor: but the world, despite the most heroic efforts, continues ever a hostile mass, inert, unlifted; and it is to be feared that, in our despairing efforts to convert the world, we have become

utterly oblivious of the character of this kingdom, and completely bewildered as to the manner of its divine institution.

The kingdom, surely, is not come yet in any such manner as the prophets foretold, and the exercise of that Imperialism pledged to Jesus continues in abeyance. The people, on whose behalf the kingdom was to be established, are in the bitter sorrow, the keen anguish, the well-nigh hopeless despair of a world-wide dispersion, from which there has been no sign of restoration since they crucified their King!

David's throne, that God had sworn by Himself to establish in power and in honor and in glory, has collapsed and come to nothing: its might is weakened into impotence; its honor is lost in infamy; its glory is gone in shame.

Jerusalem, the heaven-ordained metropolis of the Messiah's kingdom, is a city of filth, reeking in sin and in squalor, the rendezvous of a cosmopolitan crowd that in assassinating hatred are thirsting for one another's blood, while, in the name of Christ, they flaunt their flags in gaudy processions, and defile with their hopeless mummeries the Church of the Holy Sepulchre. The mortal horror of it all is enough to make one's blood run cold. Yet heaven is silent; no sword leaps from the scabbard to quell this disorderly riot; no fire breaks from the bowels of the earth to burn

this worthless refuse! Where is the Lord God of Elijah?

Not a sign of the Lord's coming! Not a word of it, save that long ago spoken and now well-nigh forgotten! Abroad in the land are the mockers that are saying, "Where is the promise of his coming? for since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were from the beginning of the creation" (2 Pet. 3:4).

The Church, chafing and smarting under the jeering taunts of such scoffers, and losing her confidence in the sure word of prophecy, has tried to justify her eschatological thinking through an attempted reconciliation of history with prophecy, and, having failed in this, she is now attempting—we say it over again—an impossible task, that of bringing in the kingdom without the King. But, without the King, neither intercession nor effort shall avail to bring in the kingdom. "Now, therefore, why speak ye not a word of bringing the king back?" (2 Sam. 19:10).

The kingdom, instituted by a decisive act of power and then established in righteousness upon the earth, with the King visibly and personally present in it and reigning in splendor and glory over it, is the one outstanding feature in the Messianic predictions of the prophets. Their words concerning the kingdom and the King are precise, clear, intelligible, and upon their meaning there was put

no strained nor unnatural construction until the Church, having lost her hope of the Lord's return, ascended the throne of the Cæsars and looked out upon a prospective converted Roman Empire as the kingdom spoken of by the prophets.

Eusebius, the historian of the early Church, with exuberant enthusiasm writes: "The kingdoms of this world have become the kingdoms of our Lord Jesus Christ, a King and a Priest is on the throne, the prophecies are accomplished, and the earth sings, Alleluia!"

Augustine, justly revered as one of the Fathers of the Church, taught that the kingdom had been established upon the earth, and that the thousand years of our Lord's reign were running their course. And, to come much nearer to our own day, does not the great Jonathan Edwards in measured words claim that the Revival in Northampton, Massachusetts, is the kingdom not coming, but come?

Such teaching involves necessarily the spiritual interpretation of prophecy—really a perversion, though—and, like harvest from seed-sowing, the allegorical interpretation of Old Testament promises, with their misapplication, has become the rule of Scripture expositors. Under this method of allegorising away plain words Bible teachers, in their conflicting attempts to show that language does not really mean what it says, have been in a strife irreconcilable, and, as a consequence, it

is a deplorable fact that in some of our divinity schools predictive prophecy has been unceremoniously shown to the door, and, by many now, predictive prophecy is no longer esteemed worthy of a moment's consideration. This involves a serious loss to the Church, a loss that can be repaired only by a return to, and an unprejudiced study of, the Messianic prophecy that is now nearing its full fulfilment.

A spiritual kingdom in the hearts of believers is of course a possible concept, but, even were every human being on earth converted to Christ, that would not constitute the kingdom in the form predicted by the prophets. Nor does Scripture anywhere contemplate this much cried-up conversion of the world through the preaching of the gospel. On the contrary, the moral condition of the world, before the Second Coming of the Lord, lapses into the filthy quagmire that engulfed Sodom and Gomorrah, and equals in its infamy the daring iniquity that evoked the Deluge.

The kingdom of heaven is not here yet, except territorially, and in a mixed moral condition of good and evil, and in this mixed condition it is to continue until the world—the Church having been meanwhile taken away—shall ripen for the black harvest under the darkening skies of God's fierce anger.

The rebellion of the world, and not its conversion, is to bring back the King. In that

day Jerusalem shall be lifted from her desolation of many generations, and shall be builded as a city that is compact together: for the Lord hath chosen Zion; He hath desired it for His habitation.

For Zion's sake, saith the Lord, will I not hold my peace, and for Jerusalem's sake I will not rest, until the righteousness thereof go forth as brightness, and the salvation thereof as a lamp that burneth.

In that day it shall be proclaimed unto the end of the world, Say ye to the daughter of Zion, Behold, thy salvation cometh; behold, his reward is with him, and his work before him. And they shall call them, The holy people, The redeemed of the Lord: and thou shalt be called, Sought out, A city not forsaken.

In that day shall this song be sung in the land of Judah: We have a strong city; salvation will God appoint for walls and bulwarks. Open ye the gates, that the righteous nation which keepeth the truth may enter in.

These statements are not to be contested by any one without contesting the authority of the Scripture that makes them, and bringing down upon the soul the guilt of handling the Word of God deceitfully.

Jerusalem, lifted from its wretchedness and ruin; Jerusalem, reconstructed, cleansed of its filthiness, redeemed, beautified, is to become yet the Messiah's royal metropolis, the

Messiah's, who in sovereign majesty and glory shall there over Israel reign, and the splendor and fame of His rule of righteousness shall through Israel be published abroad among all the nations.

But altogether impossible is this conception to those that would, in regarding it as carnal and far beneath the dignity of the Lord Jesus Christ, adjudge themselves to be more spiritually-minded than the inspired prophets from whom such very conception is derived.

But Scripture is positive, Scripture is as clear as a sunbeam, and human speculation as to the fitness of things cannot modify what Scripture has affirmed so plainly.

The kingdom, set up and established according to the terms of these prophecies and predictions, is, in all its blessedness, only the propylon of the temple into which it leads. Beyond is the glory ineffable!

Christ must reign until all enemies are put under His feet. The Kingdom-Age is the age of the earth's "regeneration, when the Son of man shall sit on the throne of his glory" (Matt. 19:28); the saints reigning with Him, and with Him judging the twelve tribes of Israel.

Glorious during its continuance though this be, the Kingdom-Age is to end in one last defiant outbreak of rebellion that can be broken only by an overwhelming judgment that shall dissolve the very framework of the

earth; and the earth, with its heavens, shall be swept with flames of fire and burned to ashes!

But beyond this awe-inspiring empyrosis, if not out of the very incineration, there is to arise in fadeless glory the new heavens and the new earth, clad in the bridal robes of righteousness. The Paradise of God! The answer to the Lord's prayer—Thy kingdom come!

CHAPTER XIV

The New Evangel

JOHN the Baptist was a herald. Brought up at the feet of One greater than Gamaliel, he was more than a prophet: he was the King's fore-runner. His impassioned cry that rang through the desert, encouraging the true hope of the nation and striking the death-knell of popular misconception, was a summons to the people to repent and to prepare themselves for the setting up of the kingdom coming in the Person of the King. This kingdom was no creation of the imagination, but a literal kingdom long ago promised to David, and by all the prophets of Israel foretold. In John's message there was no element of mystery: of his message there was no ground for misapprehension. The prophets had predicted a literal kingdom to be here in the world established, with Christ enthroned over Israel, and reigning from Jerusalem over all the earth. Such was the kingdom that John proclaimed to be at hand.

This Gospel of the Kingdom—in the obvious and literal meaning of a kingdom—was preached by the Lord Jesus, and was preached also by the twelve men that had been sent forth to proclaim it throughout all the land of Israel. This proclamation was

made in unbroken continuity to Israel from the time of John the Baptist up till the martyrdom of Stephen. With Stephen's murder there is a decisive change in the proclamation that goes forth. The atmosphere of the Eighth Chapter of The Acts is as different from that of the Seventh as the open air in which Philip's preaching is received is different from the stifling reek of the court-house in which Stephen's testimony is burked and rejected.

In the Eighth Chapter of The Acts the note of the New Evangel is sounded. Up to this time the literal kingdom had been offered to Israel; nor did that offer close with the Cross of Christ, for the same offer was renewed by Peter on the Day of Pentecost, and subsequently made by him in the Temple.

But in vain were all these offers: against the King were set in resistance the very hearts of the people; they sent Stephen after the departed Nobleman, saying, "We will not have this man to reign over us." This rebellious fiat ended, at least temporarily, Israel's Messianic hope. The Gospel of the Kingdom was preached no more, and is to be preached no more, until Israel shall be ready for it, prepared through disciplinary suffering.

In the meantime, while Israel remains in unbelief, a New Evangel is sweetly sounding the note of preparation for another Coming of the King. The transitional link between

Stephen and Paul is Philip. Philip first preaches Christ to the Samaritans—a semi-Jewish people—and then he preaches Jesus to an Ethiopian—a pure Gentile. Like the sound of the Alpine-shepherd's horn that echoes and re-echoes through the mountains, long after the pipe itself is silent and still, so the sound of God's jubilee horn is sending its echoes along the centuries. Following Philip there is Paul; and Paul in The Acts of the Apostles is the one commanding figure to whom is given the grace and the genius to combine these notes into one glorious harmony.

Paul's commission is distinctive and separated specifically from all others. Stricken down on the high road to Damascus there comes to him the voice of the Lord, saying, "Rise, and stand upon thy feet: for I have appeared unto thee for this purpose, to make thee a minister and a witness both of these things which thou hast seen, and of those things in the which I will appear unto thee; delivering thee from the people, and from the Gentiles, unto whom now I send thee, to open their eyes, and to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins, and inheritance among them which are sanctified by faith that is in me" (Acts 26: 16-18).

In this commission of Paul's there is contemplated a field stretching far beyond the

boundaries of Israel, and in the discharge of this commission Paul is to go forth offering salvation to the Gentiles. In no prior commission was such license permitted.

Paul begins his ministry in the city of Damascus where, in a synagogue of the Jews, he preaches that Jesus is the Christ, and the Son of God. The dignity of the Person of Christ is the one theme of this apostolic herald, who —so far as the record relates—says not one word about the kingdom, but alleges openly that Jesus the crucified One is the Messiah, the Christ, and the Son of God. Such preaching, falling like a thunder-bolt upon the Jews and crushing their Messianic hope, evoked opposition the most violent, and Paul slipped away from Damascus—let down in a basket from its walls—and took flight to Jerusalem. But here he found no asylum. The city was under the cloud of God's anger. The people, by fanaticism blinded, and of impending judgment unconscious, were seething in unrest, and were boiling and raging in hatred of the Church. Especially hot was their hatred of Paul, who, once honored by the Pharisees, was now by them looked upon as a renegade and apostate from the faith. From their murderous hands Paul escaped, and fled to Tarsus, his native city. And from Jerusalem there shifts now the center of Christianity to Antioch in Syria, and from the new center with the old force there is sent forth the New Evangel.

Of this New Evangel Barnabas and Paul are chosen by the Holy Spirit to be the heralds, and with Mark they traverse the Island of Cyprus, evangelizing as they go; and then they sail for Perga. Here Mark, without the courage to meet the perils of the way, leaves them and returns home. But Paul and Barnabas press on. They are bearing the Cross of Jesus. They leave Perga behind them, they ascend the foothills, they wind their way through dangerous defiles, they cross over broken and rickety bridges, they are exposed to the roaring mountain torrents, they are in danger of wild beasts prowling and snarling in the dark caverns, they are in peril of robbers lying in wait to kill; but on they go—these two intrepid soldiers of Christ—to lift His Cross, as the oriflamme of their march, upon the plains of paganism, and there claim for the new Sacred Name the Gentile world. But everywhere they find, like an old fosse in ambush, the Judaism they had left, the Judaism that with the instinct of self-preservation was now entrenching itself in the narrowest and most exclusive zealotry. This Paul encounters in a synagogue in Antioch of Pisidia, where he preaches the first sermon that is recorded at length. In this preaching Paul, it is to be observed, does not strike the one dominant note that had characterized all previous preaching. Nor is that dominant note struck by him in any preach-

ing subsequent. John the Baptist, and Jesus Himself, and the Twelve, all announce the kingdom of heaven to be at hand; but this announcement Paul never once makes, and a definite reason must there be for such a significant omission. Is it due to the fact that the offer of the kingdom has been withdrawn? In all certainty do we hear what seems the last offer of the kingdom made by the apostle Peter, as he stood that day in the Temple.

In comparing this sermon of Peter's preached in Jerusalem—Acts ii.—with the sermon of Paul's preached in Antioch—Acts xiii.—the attention is arrested at once by a contrast most striking. Both are speaking of Christ's resurrection, and in confirmation of it each appeals to and cites the same scripture—the Sixteenth Psalm—but, while each makes application precise, and unmistakably relevant solely to Christ's resurrection, they differ widely in their statement of the purpose for which the Lord has risen from the dead.

Peter says that David "being a prophet, and knowing that God had sworn with an oath to him, that of the fruit of his loins, according to the flesh, he would raise up Christ to sit on his throne; he seeing this before, spake of the resurrection of Christ, that his soul was not left in hell, neither his flesh did see corruption" (Acts 2:30, 31).

Paul says that "David, after he had served

his own generation by the will of God, fell on sleep, and was laid unto his fathers, and saw corruption: but he, whom God raised again, saw no corruption. Be it known unto you, therefore, men and brethren, that through this man is preached unto you the forgiveness of sins: and by him all that believe are justified from all things, from which ye could not be justified by the law of Moses" (Acts 13: 36-39).

Peter preaches a literal kingdom to Israel —Christ being raised from the dead to sit on David's throne: Paul preaches a spiritual kingdom—Christ being raised from the dead, that through faith in His name sinners might be forgiven and justified. These distinctions here delineated are of vital importance, and they are distinctions that, through ignorance or oblivion of dispensational truth, have been lost in most admired disorder.

The literal kingdom, predicted and expected by prophets and apostles, has not been given up, no, by no means; nor have the promises concerning it been abrogated: its institution here upon the earth is simply held in abeyance until the New Evangel, the gospel of salvation through faith in Jesus, has been proclaimed to sinners, and the Body of Christ, the Church, has been formed. It is not—and now this statement should be preceded by a roll of drums to call attention to it—it is not, beyond a peradventure it is not, the purpose of God

to establish through the preaching of His grace a spiritual kingdom that shall displace forever the literal kingdom offered to Israel or that shall deconsecrate and make that kingdom void. The Gospel of the Kingdom, held in suspense since the martyrdom of Stephen, is to be proclaimed again, but not until after the Church is formed, and it is then to be sent forth as a witness to all nations: after this the end comes, and then the literal kingdom is to be established upon the earth. Such is the divine programme, and thus definitely and distinctly is the programme stated by the Jerusalem Council:

"Simeon hath declared how God at the first did visit the Gentiles, to take out of them a people for his name. And to this agree the words of the prophets; as it is written, After this I will return, and will build again the tabernacle of David, which is fallen down; and I will build again the ruins thereof, and I will set it up: that the residue of men might seek after the Lord, and all the Gentiles, upon whom my name is called, saith the Lord, who doeth all these things" (Acts 15: 14-17).

This is the formula—and there is no other—according to which the Church and the Kingdom, respectively, are constituted and established. God is now "visiting" the Gentiles to "take out" a people for His name—the Church: this being accomplished, He "will return" and "will build again the tab-

ernacle of David, which is fallen down''—that is, He will set up and establish the Kingdom. These purposes of His are quite distinct and absolutely divergent. The Church is to be *taken out* of the world: Israel is to be *established in* the world. The proclamations that accomplish these purposes are not identical.

The heralds of the Kingdom were sent forth by the Lord Jesus, who commanded them, saying, ''Go not into the way of the Gentiles, and into any city of the Samaritans enter ye not: but go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel. And as ye go, preach, saying, The kingdom of heaven is at hand'' (Matt. 10:5-7).

The heralds of the Cross were sent forth by the Lord Jesus, who commanded them, saying, ''All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth. Go ye, therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world. Amen'' (Matt. 28:17-20).

These two gospels are not coördinate; they are not concurrent. One of them is the gospel of the kingdom: the other of them is the gospel of eternal salvation. This contemplates a kingdom in heaven: that, a kingdom on earth. The gospel of the kingdom is national: the gospel of salvation is individual. The first of

the twain has in view a national conquest, the Kingship of Jesus accepted by Israel, and an administration of social righteousness established over the nations: the second has in view an individual conquest, the Lordship of Jesus accepted in the heart and confessed by the lips of the believer.

"Christianity is indeed universal in its character, the call of the gospel being world wide—'to every creature which is under heaven'; but it is not a call to earthly but to heavenly blessings, and to stranger-ship and pilgrim character upon the earth. And this is, so far, only what the family of faith has all along confessed (Heb. 11:13-16). Israel's inheritance nationally is another matter. Heaven, in the prophets, is a place of God's dwelling, but little is known of what is inside, even though Enoch went there, and Elijah went there, in days long since. For us it is opened and furnished. Christ has come out and has gone in, and now we know it; and He is coming again to receive us unto Himself. Our blessings are in heavenly places in Him; our home is with Himself. In two different ways people get confused and confuse others, as to things as plain as this. Some, in the enjoyment of what is simple Christian truth today, read their Christianity back into the Old Testament, and can think of nothing else but a heavenly inheritance for all saints of all times. Some, on the other hand, read the Old

Testament forward into the New Testament, and make the earth the final habitation of all. Scripture is larger and more diverse than either of these understand.''*

Whether, therefore, it be in the gospel of the kingdom, preached to Israel nationally, or in the gospel of salvation, preached to the world generally, repentance is fundamental and indispensable: for individual regeneration—the guerdon of true repentance, is the essential requisite for social righteousness as it is for individual salvation. But the kingdom is contemplated in the first gospel: the Church, in the second.

Ideally, then, the Church is a company of believers in the Lord Jesus Christ, strangers on earth and pilgrims through it, and, as they journey they are witnessing to a Redeemer, crucified, risen, glorified, interceding, and coming again; they are preaching in His name to a world of sinners eternal salvation through faith in His atoning blood. But upon this world through which these pilgrims are passing the shadow of the Cross is lying, and yet the Cross itself is light, revealing what the world really is—a Golgotha, the place of a skull, the desolation of reason, the realm of the dead. Thus over the world, though the Cross be lifted, there hangs the pall of death. The world, as a whole, is by the Cross condemned. The world lieth in the wicked one.

*F. W. Grant: *The Numerical Bible.*

The world is lost! Reconstruction through human effort is not possible—no, neither ethical, nor humanitarian, nor sociological reconstruction. The world is sinking. Fallen humanity, under the weight of its guilt and its sin, is sinking, too. Individual salvation through faith in Jesus is the only and one hope of humanity. The world is moving swiftly and silently on to judgment; the world cannot be ethically improved; the world cannot be socially saved.

Out of the world God is taking a people for His Name; out of the world He is saving individuals through individual regeneration. This is the one and only theme of the New Evangel. The Church is not commissioned to transform Golgotha into Paradise: she cannot. She cannot check the yeasty waters of iniquity: more easily could she bind the tides with a rope of sand. Men are sinking, sinking under the weight of their sins, into a dark eternity, sinking without hope and without Christ; and the Church is commissioned to hold the Cross of Jesus before these dying sinners, and to bid them look and live. Such is the gospel for this present age, and absolutely useless and futile is it to seek, in any other direction, relief for the sorrows that are afflicting the world—the agonies of an ever-falling red rain!

"I, if I be lifted up from the earth," said the glorious Giver of life, "will draw all men

unto me." Without this lifting up of Christ to the Cross, at once the revelation of God's love, and the revelation of man's incorrigible hatred, the world, long ere now, would have been fused into slag in the fires of God's wrath; sinners have their foothold even to sin, because of that Cross in the middle of the three. Under the sheltering arms of that Cross alone is there hope for men. This is the gospel, and for this age other gospel is there none. "If any man preach any other gospel unto you than that ye have received, let him be anathema" (Gal. 1:9).

Broad as the sea is God's love; narrow as an isthmus to a shipwrecked man is God's covenant. The "higher criticism," with its travel out of the record, cutting blocks with a philological razor; with its talk at random, its specious denial of the supernatural, its nameless fling of dishonor upon the Person of our Lord Jesus Christ, its caviling criticism and mean suspicion of the Word of God—this "new theology" is a wheel around, and an abjuration of the faith once delivered to the saints. To say more is needless: to say less is impossible.

But recently, above the horizon, does there arise a strange figure, with no Christ, no Cross, no Atoning Blood; and this Sir Oracle postulates "the fundamental unity of all religions," and he is warmly welcomed among us as one that "may help the material fervor

of the Occident to gain a new peace by the infiltration of the harmonies of the Orient." To your tents, O Israel!

Whenever the Church has misinterpreted her charter, and has practically denied her heavenly citizenship, whenever she has ceased her pilgrimage, and has settled down in the earth, she has labored invariably under the extraordinary misapprehension that she has been invested with authority, that she has been endowed with wisdom, and that she has been set up and established in the world to ride the whirlwind and direct the storm of human passion. She has saddled herself with the obligation to solve the world's social problems, to deodorize and elutriate its slums, to drain its sink of political corruption, and to advance its ethical and educational status.

Instead of the Church accepting the reality of the world's rebellion and ruin, and instead of her preaching Jesus as the one and only door of escape from judgment impending, she has committed herself to the more than impossible task of cleansing the Augean stable of the world. But for this lustration there is available one river, and only one—the river of the water of life. Of this water the Church may drink, but she cannot—though she tries it—convey this river, by cunningly devised aqueducts, to the irrigation of the surrounding desert. This river shall yet be turned, and shall flow like a cleansing flood through the

world, but not until the Kingdom-Age shall this be. And whenever the Church has stooped to this impossible task—impossible because out of time, as the leaves'-robing of the trees in the season of winter's snow—she has unwittingly wrought either to avert the penalty of sin or to ease the consequences of sin. She has labored to make the world better, and the very best that she can do is to make the world a more respectable and fascinating place, where sinners may dig their heels deeper and continue more comfortably in their sin and rebellion against God.

But in vain does the Church hurl herself against the barracoon where Satan's slaves are quartered. These gates of hell she storms, and hell forfends and drives her back. Attempts ethical, attempts sociological, attempts humanitarian, and attempts philanthropic, go down in stinging defeat and shame-faced failure. The world remains unbraced and septic; the wilderness refuses to blossom; the solitary place declines to become glad. Resources are drained and power is forfeited through lack of insulation. The Church has power in her fellowship with God: never in her association with the world. Lot, dwelling in Sodom and earnestly concerned, no doubt, about its abounding iniquity, attracts in the sulphur-smelling city more attention than does Abraham, who dwells out of it altogether, lives from it apart,

and by it refuses to be enriched "from a thread even to a shoe-latchet." Yet see how God names Himself the God of Abraham, never once the God of Lot! and believers in the Lord Jesus Christ are called the children of Abraham, never once the children of Lot! It is not for nought these subtle distinctions are made in Holy Writ.

The men we have here cited were both saved men, but Abraham is the typical man of faith, and not Lot. Lot may dwell in Sodom, be concerned about its unfathomable corruption, devote thought and time and strength and money to correct and ameliorate its domestic, social and civic condition; but Sodom goes on to its doom, and is reduced to scoriæ and ashes in the blast-furnace of Judgment: while Lot at last flees with not a shred of personal honor, and with his garments singed, and forever in them the smell of fire.

Abraham, dwelling apart in the heights of Hebron, may seem like an non-entity in that valley of doom, an inefficient if not negligible factor in the vexing and pressing social problems of Sodom; but, as a matter of fact, it is only through the intercession of Abraham that judgment lingers at the gates of Sodom, and it is he that, in the hour of crisis, delivers Lot, swept and twirled in the eddying maelstrom of contending world-interests.

Thus, only by separation and by positive refusal of all compromise with the world, and in

abiding communion with God, may a Christian give forth an effective testimony, and have power to do works. To such separation and communion we are called by Paul's gospel—the gospel for this dispensation—and the apparent slowness of the traveling of this gospel, and its utter lack manifestly of efficiency to convert and to transform the world —something it was never designed to do—has led to a departure from the narrowness of its evangelistic commission, and to the substitution of other methods that are thought to be less antiquated and better adapted to turn the bare plain of the Jordan into multiplied bowers of flowering bliss.

The world, nevertheless, despite all heroic attempts at cultivation, gardening and floriculture, remains a desert in which no remedial jonquil grows; the ground is iron, the sky is brass, the air is a withering sirocco.

This humanity of ours, despite all the palliative and detergent remedies manufactured for it, nay, administered to it, is stretched out dying, in a lazaretto that darkens under the curse and cloud of God's anger. And yet God —as the mother-bird bends quiveringly over the hawk-threatened nest—"so loved the world"—and loves it—that He gave—and gives—His only begotten Son, that the whosoevers might believe and not perish. Yea, over this sterile desert, and before this fetid lazaretto, there is standing the Cross of Jesus;

and this Cross of Jesus, with Him as dying Lamb of God, is the sole remedy for the double bane: the one afflicting the earth; the other, its people.

"Dogmatic systems may change, and have changed so far as they reflect transitory phases of speculative thought, but the primitive gospel is unchangeable as it is inexhaustive. There can be no addition to it. It contains in itself all that will be slowly wrought out in thought and deed until the consummation."*

*Westcott: *Religious Thought in the West.*

CHAPTER XV

The Church

THE Kingdom is in abeyance.

The twelve tribes of Israel, over which Christ came to reign, are now blind judicially, and they are in the sorrow and anguish of a world-wide dispersion.

The throne of David abides, although only as a memory enshrining the imperishable and unwavering hope of a once powerful and proud, but now conquered and humbled people.

The King, refused, condemned, crucified, cast out from the earth, hath risen from the dead, and is now, in His glorified Humanity, sitting at the right hand of the Majesty on high, and upholding all things by the word of His power.

The whole world lieth in the wicked one. The shadow of the cross is upon it; it is soaked with the blood of martyrs; it is unreconciled and irreconcilable to God; it is under sentence of condemnation; it is awaiting its doom in the now-nearing day of its judgment.

All of these statements are facts, and they are facts that are denied by none save them that close their eyes to Revelation; a Revelation, too, that is authenticated, ratified, and

sealed by the cumulative evidence that is embalmed in the tedious and tiresome record of nearly twenty centuries of human history.

That God should have suspended, too, for that great space of time, the execution of the sentence; that God should have called upon all men everywhere to repent and to be reconciled; that God should have offered to all men the forgiveness of their sins, and eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord—all this, surely, is of love and in grace, of mercy and in patience, the fullest disclosure of Almighty forbearance, compassion, and clemency, that could possibly have been made to a world of sinners.

The sinners that hear and heed this call of God, the sinners that believe in the Lord Jesus Christ and that are washed in His blood, the sinners that are regenerated by the Holy Spirit—these are the "called out" ones that constitute THE CHURCH, and she will reign with Christ when THE KINGDOM shall have been established in power and glory upon the earth.

This kingdom, during the King's absence, is left in the hands of men for its administration, and the character of this administration, as well as the form assumed by the kingdom, is represented by what have been called the kingdom-parables.

"The kingdom of heaven"—as characterized by these parables—is not the Church,

though the Church is in "the kingdom of heaven," and is one of its "mysteries."

The evasion, or non-observance, of this contra-distinction of the Church from the kingdom is the genesis of the many interpretations, variously conflicting and generally erroneous, of the seven parables recorded in the thirteenth chapter of the Gospel of Matthew. These parables represent the current of events following the King's rejection; the circumstances or conditions of things that prevail during His absence from the earth; the various activities that—whether for good or for evil—are historically related to the kingdom in its development up to a future constitution and manifestation; and these activities, covering the entire period between the King's absence and His return, are called the "mysteries of the kingdom of heaven"; and they take on the form of parables in order that their meaning may be hidden from the judicially blinded Jew.

The Church is, in her call and in her constitution, but one of the "mysteries" of the kingdom of heaven, and she, while as such in historical relationship to the kingdom in its progress toward the consummation, is none the less distinct from the kingdom whose joint-heir and ruler with the King she is to be.

The kingdom begins—in its mystery form—with the sowing of "the word of the kingdom" in the hearts of men, and this sowing

brings into being "the children of the kingdom." These "children of the kingdom"—as wheat—are then sown in the broad field of the world, where, also, Satan sows tares, which are spoken of as "the children of the wicked one." These two, the wheat and the tares—"the children of the kingdom" and "the children of the wicked one"—grow on together till the harvest, at the end of the age, when the tares are bundled up for burning, and the wheat is gathered into the barn. Wherever go the children of the kingdom, there go the children of the wicked one; and wherever is sown the wheat, there also are sown the tares.

This conflict for the possession of the field—the world—goes on until—at the consummation of the age—the field is cleared out, and the kingdom is established in power and glory.

The "mustard tree" and the "leavened meal" are also "mysteries" of the kingdom—the King absent and His interests in the hands of men.

The Tree—the symbol in Scripture of a kingdom—is abnormal in growth, and is dubious in character. The "mustard seed" that, according to nature, should have produced an "herb," develops into a "tree"; and the "birds" that lodge in its branches are identical with the "fowls" that picked up the seed fallen by the wayside.

Here, then, is a picture of the Church as—

in the days of Constantine—she ascended the throne of the Cæsars, and in her external organization became, contrary to her constitution and character, a *pseudo*-world-kingdom that sheltered all kinds and manner of evil: and even so, in her visible organization, has the Church gone on to this very day.

The Leaven—the symbol in Scripture of false doctrine—produces fermentation, and is, in its expansion, really vitiating: its evil and insidious action arrestable only by fire.

The Church, in the fourth century, became apostate. Through alliance with the world she was leavened with false doctrine, and she so continues to this day. The startling phenomenon of the "higher criticism" is from the Faith the last departure; from which, as has been demonstrated, there is no issue but in return. These, and kindred evils, shall continue in their leavening till—save the whole wheat—all else is transformed, and then further degenerative action shall suddenly be arrested by the sweeping fires of divine judgment.

Likewise are the "Treasure" and the "Pearl" twain mysteries of "the kingdom of heaven"—the one representing Israel, the elect people of earth, the heirs of the kingdom; the other representing the Church, the undivided Body of Christ, the Bride of the King.

The Field—the world—in which Israel is

now hidden has been acquired by purchase, and the Treasure, in a rapidly nearing day, is to be dug up, and just as treasure-trove in the earth belongs, in the common law of England, to the Crown of the Realm, so Israel found is to revert to the King and is to be constituted a literal kingdom—and this consummation of the ages is, with vast wealth of detail, foretold by Jehovah's official prophets from first to last.

The "Pearl of great price"—brought up out of the sea of the nations—is, on the other hand, the Church for which the glorious Merchantman sold all that He had, that He might possess Himself of it.

The Dragnet represents the operative activities of the Gospel of the Kingdom—the evangelizing of the nations—all this after the Church has been taken out of the world, and immediately before the King's coming again in glory.

In these parables of the kingdom the Church is depicted with various features. The Seed of the first parable produces the Wheat of the second parable; and this Wheat, sown and grown and ripened for harvest, represents the whole body of real and true believers in Christ during the entire dispensation that extends from His rejection to His Second Advent.

The Mustard Tree and the Leavened Meal of the parables delineate the Visible Church

—using the term now as in common speech—not apostate wholly, but, since the fourth century, in affinity with the world—the ecclesiastical expansion, external and internal, being alike doubtful ethically because of an unholy alliance of things sacred and things secular.

The Pearl is the True Church, now in her freedom from fracture or fault, and in her preciousness and beauty without "spot or wrinkle or any such thing"; the Church, purchased at unspeakable cost, not with corruptible things, such as silver and gold, but with the precious blood of Christ, as of the lamb without blemish; the Church at poles removed from all that is false, and heart-beloved by Him that bought her so; the Church sustained by Him in suffering, strengthened by Him in weakness, preserved by Him through peril, kept by Him from falling—yea, at last, presented by Him faultless before the presence of the Divine Glory, this with exceeding joy—the joy His!

This Church, the one and the only Church in logical and Scriptural terminology, is the Bride of Christ—in contra-distinction from Israel, the bride of Jehovah. The Church is the Body of Christ, the fulness of Him that filleth all in all. Of her origin, of her calling, of her unique glory, of her destiny, nothing is known in the Old Testament, save in the intimation and the implication that the light of the New Testament alone can expound and

unfold. This Church, the Church, is not the kingdom; and this, it is to be observed, is altogether consistent with the apostle's exhortation to give "thanks unto the Father, which hath made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light: who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son" (Col. 1:13): the Apocalypse of Him with whom we shall be manifested in glory when He comes to set up and establish His kingdom on earth.

To-day is the day and the time of the Lord's rejection, and into the place of blessing lost by Israel there has come the Church; but into this place she has come as a stranger and a pilgrim, and hers are blessings, but in a higher sphere than that of earth, where Israel alone had promise of the Divine benediction. Israel had, and has, a right to the expectation of being established upon this earth, but to the Church there belongs no such right. She is a stranger here, and to this the family of faith has confessed all along, and the power of her testimony never weakens except when she halts or loiters in her transient pilgrimage. When she forsakes her tent and dwells in a rock-hewn house, or when she converts her curtain-tabernacle into a cedar-rafted temple, she, like Isaac at Gerar, loses her influence over the Philistines, and has to contend for every well she digs. She has been

"called out" of the world, and she is expected to take a straight course through it.

Israel's present place is in the boat, tossed by the waves, the wind contrary: the Church's present place is on the water with Peter walking to meet Jesus, by Him to be kept from sinking, and with Him to return to Israel, when the tempest shall be stilled, and the boat become steady, and from the sea of the nations the chosen earthly people shall be brought ashore to inherit the kingdom blessings that shall follow the great Epiphany.

In the beginning of her history the Church, in loyal devotion to Jesus, kept herself separate from the world. She walked orderly before God, and in the eyes of the world was an object but of contempt and of ridicule. Over her, indeed, hovered the shadow of the cross. The world's hatred that pursued Jesus to the cursed transom of the tree pursued Him after His death in pursuing and persecuting His followers. Of this dark destiny on earth they had been forewarned, and, as we see from the martyr-fires verily quenched by faith in the unseen, with them to be forewarned was to be forearmed. Crucified with Christ, they became the prey of hawk and buzzard. The world would hate them—so had they been forewarned—because it had hated Jesus. They were not of the world, but had been chosen out of the world, and the condemnation that such election involved would be an-

other reason for the world's hatred. They were to expect persecution. The time should come when they would be put out of the synagogues; yea, they would be killed, and that sullen hatred of their murderers would so blunt sensibility and pervert conscience that, in killing these elect, the killers would verily think that they were doing God service.

Of the early Christians one after another went down in martrydom, their faith sealing with their blood; and these days of the Church were, by common consent, the days of her purity and her power. She was in a state of expectancy, unwearying, waiting for the Return, visible, glorious, and personal, of her Lord and Head, Jesus Christ. For these first "Christ's ones"—as the name implies—all hope was inseparably linked with the Lord's Return—all hope, whether they be living or whether they be dead. This hope, like an anchor of celestial steel, held within the veil, and it dragged not as mounting waves, one after another, over these believers rolled. But come, the Lord did not.

The Church to her calling remained true until Rome, though pagan at heart, arrayed herself in the white garments of Christian profession. The bitter east wind of adversity veered, and over the Church there now blew softly the south wind of prosperity. The furious storms of persecution died away, and the waves under imperial Peter's feet were

leveled, and on the charmed ocean the Halcyon of ecclesiasticism could brood and lay her eggs of pride in a nest that floated surf-immune on the untroubled waters. Under the soothing lullaby of ease and comfort the virgin Church, oblivious now of the Lord's return, forgot her vows to watch, grew drowsy, and at last sank into deepest slumber. While she slept she dreamed a dream: It was that the Millennium had dawned! and she was living in the time of Christ's reign over the earth—she, the Kingdom by prophets foretold!

She had tried for awhile to keep awake. Church History gives us, indeed, a glimpse of a few that refused to turn over to sleep. These called themselves the "Sleepless Ones," and they divided their numbers into six choirs, so that day and night without ceasing there might ascend to heaven their hymns and prayers. But the Bridegroom somehow tarried, and this failure in the expectant had upon them all its psychic effect. The Lord's Return as a lively hope died: we see it become indistinct and vague, and at last fade away.

"The expectation of the conversion of the world came in to replace the true Christian hope of being taken out of it, the millennial reign being finally interpreted by the event of the overthrow of paganism in the Roman empire. After Constantine, but one prominent teacher is known to have favored what was

then called 'chiliasm'; and he an unsound man."

The virgins all were overcome with sleep, and from sleep they sank into unbroken coma. Of temporal extension rather than of spiritual progress they slept and dreamed. Through the long night solitary voices were here and there uplifted, but the Church, as an organism, exhausted of spiritual strength, slept on; and in this condition, according to the parable of the Virgins, the Church continues till the breaking in upon her of the Midnight Cry. This, indeed, will awake her, but—When the Lord comes, shall He find faith on the earth?

The virgins, contra-distinguished from the rest as being "wise," are they that have oil—the symbol of the Holy Spirit—and, under this luminous halo, they are lighted through the gloom to meet their returning Lord. With Him they go into the marriage, and the door is shut.

But, on the other hand, the "foolish" are they that have not the furnishing of the "wise"; and the poor glimmer of profession flares up for a moment, but is at once extinguished when the reality of His coming is no longer in doubt; against them the door is shut: they never enter in! It is, indeed, a solemn thought that "one may have a good enough light to welcome the Bridegroom, *when He is not there,* and find, when faced

with the reality, that the light reckoned on expires at once!"

When the thousand years—supposed by Augustine to be the period of Christ's very Reign upon earth—had run their course, there rose, like one of those mystic heavings from mid-ocean, a wave of unbelief that swept over the professing Church, and her slumber of coma security was rudely broken in upon. And awake indeed did she when the voice of Martin Luther rang through the German Empire, and the knocking of that historical hammer as he nailed the Protestant theses to the door of the Schloss Kirche in Wittenberg, echoed through the Papal world, and the Catholic communities, startled by the sudden cry, scattered like a flock of sheep. But the panic-stricken sheep were at length mastered, and driven into corral, and fenced-in in their different folds. Their eyes, however, were kept open from slumbering by the clamor of conflicting voices, until they were again soothed and lulled into drowsy unconsciousness by an English clergyman named Whitby, who exhausted his wit and his wisdom in the endeavor to convince them that listened to him, that all was verily well, that the world was steadily growing better, that by the preaching of the Gospel the kingdom was soon to be established under the sovereign authority of Christ. So the sheep fell asleep, slept on, and left to the preachers the comforting

and optimistic function of trumpeting the tidings of peace.

The Church, in her incoherent dreaming, has since committed herself to the stupendous labor of converting the world—and, as if the task were not so very difficult after all, in modern methods there is tacked on the time of the achievement—"in this generation": so down in the world she has settled herself and refuses to stir until this same world is brought under subjection to the authority of Christ. Forgotten the fact has she, that she is a pilgrim, that her path through the world is one that is unbeaten by the feet of the multitudes, one over which she alone with her Lord must pass as an unnoticed stranger. But this path of her pilgrimage she has forsaken, and the power of her testimony is gone. She has exchanged her tent for a rock-hewn laboratory, wherein, stimulated by the rumble and roll of her complex machinery whose motive power is gold, she experiments and speculate, brewing and blending cordials and nostrums in the futile attempt to discover the one catholicon that will ease the pain and cure the ills of a death-stricken humanity. But she is sowing the sand; she is devoting her energies uselessly. The world cannot be saved; the world is to be judged; individuals, by individual regeneration, may be saved out of it: and the sooner the Church awakes to this, the sooner will she execute her God-ordained commis-

sion. It wounds her pride to go through the world unnoticed, and she would, therefore, put the world under tribute, deceiving herself with the illusory notion that by her ceaseless activity the world is to be saved. Under the spell of this notion she believes in herself, believes that she is awake, alert and active; but in profound slumber she is sunk and knows it not. She seems to prefer the misery of her self-deception. She sleeps and dreams her old dream—dreams that she is conquering the world beautifully; that she is stemming steadily and surely the foul and turbid tide of iniquity; that she is reclaiming the arid desert; that she is turning the mirage into a pool; that she is helping her Lord to bring in the Kingdom! She is pathetically hopeful, proudly expectant, pretentiously optimistic. Her features, as the lights and shadows play upon them, are calm and peaceful; for she is asleep and dreaming a pleasant dream, unconscious all the while of the delirious fever raging through her veins and causing a vivid hallucination, but one as dangerous as vivid: the kingdom that she is so strangely seeking to establish is not the kingdom of the Messiah; it is a kingdom of *Micomicon!*

Any that are impatient with such suggestion may naturally ask, "What, then, is expected of the Church?" The answer is a simple one—Absolute separation from the world in order to have power over it. But this the

Church, committed to her own propaganda, denies.

The Church—it has ever to be borne in mind—is not an Old Testament institution. The Church is not contemplated in the kingdom prophecies. The Church nowhere comes into view until the Lord makes known His intention to build it. In her call, her character, her mission, and her destiny, she lay hidden in the counsels of God until there was made definitely manifest the rejection of Christ by Israel. In this rejection of Christ, the world, all the time in riotous revolt, declared its independence of God, and the world was permitted to go on to its inevitable and self-inflicted doom.

But God is love, compassionate and merciful, lenient and forbearing with sinners; and, though in righteousness pronouncing judgment upon the world, He in sovereign grace the sentence of execution stays, that He may call out, justify, and glorify believers in Jesus, through whose atoning blood reconciliation is possible yet. It is these believers in Jesus that constitute the Church, and God is calling these believers in Jesus out, "that in the ages to come he might show the exceeding riches of his grace in his kindness toward us through Christ Jesus" (Eph. 2:7).

The Church, then, to be to her calling true, to her character faithful, and to her destiny believing, should be arrayed in the garments

of a wayfaring man, with the travel-stains manifest. Brighten into glory does she not till the ages to come are here. Her mission to the world, then, as she journeys it through, is to bear witness to a Redeemer, crucified, risen, glorified, and coming again. Her citizenship is in heaven, from whence she waits for a Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall fashion anew the body of her humiliation, that it may be conformed to the body of His glory. It is this transfiguration into the likeness of her glorious Lord that is the Church's destiny. Here she is a stranger: there the bride of the Bridegroom. For her there is set for a sign in the heavens a light that hangs out a luster, unwavering and clear, and this before there breaks over the hills of the earth the light of the proclaimed kingdom.

Now Israel through her long night of sorrow is waiting for the kingdom that shall be ushered in by "the dayspring from on high."

And now the Church, between the darkness and the dawn, is scanning the face of the heavens for the beauteous beaming of "The Morning Star."

In the beginning of the Creation the lights were set in the firmament of the heavens to divide the day from the night; and to be for signs, and for seasons, and for days, and years, and in this appointment the sun was to rule the day, and the moon was to rule the

night: and the night should bring out and manifest the stars. And these lights of the firmament are all betokening signs.

The sun, the ruler of the day, is the mute but luminous herald of Christ, the light of whose glory, as it breaks over the heights of Zion, shall bring in the kingdom.

"He that ruleth over men must be just, ruling in the fear of God. And he shall be as the light of the morning, when the sun shineth, even a morning without clouds" (2 Sam. 23:3, 4).

The moon, the ruler of the night, in its full-orbed shining is a sign of the Word of God, reflecting the light of the sun gone down; guiding our feet through the gloom of night.

"I have remembered thy name, O Lord, in the night, and have kept thy law. Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path. The entrance of thy words giveth light" (Psa. 119:55, 105, 130).

The stars, rulers neither by day nor rulers by night, are the glimmering symbols of the believers in Christ, the "star" seed of Abraham.

"That ye may be blameless and harmless, the sons of God, without rebuke, in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation, among whom ye shine as lights in the world" (Phil. 2:15).

But unique in all the starry host is the appointment of the bright, the Morning Star.

And this is the shining Courier, the mystic Ariel, of Christ.

"I am the root and the offspring of David, and the bright, the morning star" (Rev. 22: 16). "And he that overcometh, and keepeth my works unto the end, to him will I give power over the nations: and he shall rule them with a rod of iron; as the vessels of a potter shall they be broken to shivers: even as I received of my Father. And I will give him the morning star" (Rev. 2: 26-28).

When the morning star in its solitary shining is decking the face of the sky, all other stars grow indistinct and fade from the sight of men. So shall it be with the Church—the stars that have been twinkling through the long dark night. Between this dawn and this sunrise, when the Morning Star, in its mystic and solitary glory, is brightening in the firmament, the Church—the stars that are held in the royal hand—shall be drawn up and away, and from the sight of the earth be gone.

"The dead in Christ shall rise first: then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in clouds"—not, be it marked, *the* clouds, but "in clouds" —from the tombs of the dead and from the dwelling places of the living—"to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord" (1 Thess. 4: 16, 17).

Then shall it have come to pass that the embattled host of Jehovah, the soldiers of

Christ, shall have heard the reveille-call. Gone shall have they, whether from the bivouac of the dead or from the tented field! gone to their last encampment! gone, but to be mustered in unbroken phalanx on the Plains of Light!

CHAPTER XVI

The End of the Age

THE Church, like Enoch of old, is to be translated. What is to occur upon the earth, following upon such translation, is not a matter of conjecture. We have "a more sure word of prophecy; whereunto ye do well that ye take heed, as unto a light that shineth in a dark place, until the day dawn, and the day star arise in your hearts" (2 Pet. 1:19).

The lamp of prophecy illumes the seven years that measure the time from the appearing of the Morning Star to the rising of the Sun of Righteousness.*

During these seven years the earth is purged of its evil by a series of divine judgments; and "immediately after the tribulation of those days shall the sun be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light, and the stars shall fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens shall be shaken: and then shall appear the sign of the Son of man in heaven: and then shall all the tribes of the earth mourn, and they shall see the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory. And he shall send

*For the scriptural demonstration of the length of this period see the Author's *God's Oath,* pages 210-220. London: Published by Hodder & Stoughton; New York: By the George H. Doran Co.

his angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and they shall gather together his elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other'' (Matt. 24:29-31).

This tribulation-period, whatever be its duration, and whatever be the character of the penal afflictions during the entire epoch, is followed immediately by the visible and personal Coming of the Lord Jesus Christ in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory.

Inasmuch as this epoch of seven years lies away in the future, an epoch beginning with the translation of the Church and ending with the personal return of the Lord, the events that come to pass therein can be known and established with certainty only through prophecy, through prophecy alone. This epoch, from its commencement to its conclusion, is co-extensive and co-terminate with the period called ''the end of the age.'' The age, of which the seven years constitute the ''end,'' is the Jewish age, and it must be differentiated from the present ''age of grace'' during which the Church is being formed—and this until the kingdom by Israel be definitely received at the end of their own—the Jewish age. The Jewish age was interrupted by the rejection of the Messiah: it is in suspense during the present age of grace, and until the Church is formed: it shall then be resumed and finished. The seven years that

follow the translation of the Church are "the end" of this Jewish age.

God's covenant with David—2 Sam. 7: 4-17—which was unconditional and irreversible and to be abrogated never, inaugurated the age during which the kingdom was offered to Israel, and this age continued its course until its progress was arrested by the rejection of the Son of David, the Messiah, that had come to effectuate the covenant and to establish the kingdom. The rejection of Christ did not bring to an end the Jewish age, but the rejection of Christ did arrest the historical progress of that age and suspended its course temporarily. The Jewish nation was no longer owned as God's own people: Jerusalem was utterly destroyed; her people were judicially blinded; their land was desolated and laid waste, and they themselves were banished into exile among the nations, and there in dispersion they continue to this day.

This "casting away" of the Jews ended for the time being their history as the people of God, and for the completion of their covenanted history it is clear that the Jewish age must be resumed. Meanwhile, during this break or cleavage of the Jewish age, there has been introduced the present Age of Grace, in which God is "taking out" from all nations, Jews and Gentiles alike, "a people for his name"—the Church. But when this has been accomplished, the Jewish age is to

be resumed and carried on to its full conclusion.

The present age is to end in general apostasy, and this is the solemn precursor of the frightful moral condition that is to prevail during "the end of the age"; that is, when God takes up the broken thread of Jewish history and brings to an issue His covenants with Israel.

The Spirit expressly warns us that in the latter days some will revolt from the faith: they will give heed to deluding spirits and to doctrines of demons (1 Tim. 4:1).

"This know also, that in the last days perilous times shall come: for men shall be lovers of their own selves, covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, without natural affection, truce-breakers, false accusers, incontinent, fierce, despisers of those that are good, traitors, heady, high-minded, lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God; having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof: from such turn away" (2 Tim. 2:1-5).

Apostates are they that deliberately revolt from and reject revealed Truth; that deny the authority and integrity of God's Word; that depreciate the Person of our Lord Jesus Christ, and dishonor the Blood of Atonement.

Apostasy—What is it? It is deliberate treason; it is sullen defection; and it is, therefore, worse than error, for this may be

due to ignorance, or to monomania: apostasy is worse than heresy, for this may be due to blind zealotry or bigotry. The present age is to end in a general apostasy, from and out of which the true Church shall be removed up into heaven, and then the world shall ripen fast for the harvest of doom.

The Thessalonians were under the impression that "The day of the Lord" was imminent: not "The day of Christ"—as the expression is erroneously rendered in the common version of 2 Thess. 2:2.

"The day of Christ" imminent was, imminent ever is: "The day of the Lord"—a different expression of different meaning—imminent was not, imminent now is not. "The day of Christ" is the time of the appearing of Christ in the air, whither the Church is to be caught up to meet Him, and it is this day that is imminent, that is ever imminent: this day may dawn at any moment; for this day the Church is to be ready ever, and this day antedates by seven years the coming of "the day of the Lord." The personal return of the Lord to the earth, the Church returning with Him, opens "The day of the Lord," and this day of the Lord continues until every enemy has been put into subjection under Him, when the kingdom is to be delivered up to God the Father, that He may be All in All.

The Thessalonians had heard from some

source that "The day of the Lord" was at hand, and this they had taken for granted: so Paul wrote to them, saying, "Now I beg of you, my brothers—with respect to the Coming of our Lord Jesus the Messiah, and our own gathering to meet Him—not to drift storm-tossed from your mental moorings, not to give way to hysterical excitement—whether it be through some pretended 'revelation of the Spirit,' or through some calculation based on prophecy, or through a letter purporting to come from me—this under the impression that 'The day of the Lord' is imminent. Let no one, by any artifice, you deceive. That day will not dawn till there have come two things first—the Revolt from the Faith, and the revelation of the Man of Sin, the Son of Perdition, who opposes himself to, and exalts himself above, every being that bears the name of God, yea, above every object of worship, even going so far as to enthrone himself in the temple of God, verily masquerading as the very Deity. Have you forgotten how, while I was still among you, I kept telling you this? And now you know what it is that holds him in check, postponing thus his revelation till the date appointed for him. But come he will, for the mystic bias of wickedness is already stirring the world. But the power that holds all in control will continue to check till it be swept from the path—*then,* then shall be revealed that Law-

less one! But him shall the Lord Jesus blast with the breath of His mouth, him shall annihilate with the splendor of His appearing. Again, bear this in mind: a distinctive feature of that Lawless One's appearance is to be a special exertion of the influence of Satan, attended with all his power, with signs, with delusive marvels, and with every conceivable deception of a wickedness that will victimize those that are in the path that drops downward to ruin, those that are there just because they first rejected all desire for the truth, and so bar did they their own way to salvation. In retribution for this, God is now sending upon them an impulse to infatuation, leading them to credit that lie of the divinity of the Man of Sin, in order that all may be judged that have not only refused obedience to the truth, but have actually gloated over iniquity'' (2 Thess. 2:1-12. Gr. following Way's Translation).

In this delineation and paraphrase there are four features very distinct: first, a revolt from the Faith; second, the removal of the power that restrains the working of iniquity; third, the revelation of the Man of Sin; and, fourth, his destruction at the Coming of the Lord.

If, then, this present age of grace is to end in a revolt from the Faith—as this Scripture solemnly affirms—surely it passes the subtlest power of the imagination to conceive how

any man that bows to the authority of Scripture is able to persuade himself—and to persist in the wilful whim—that the world is always growing better and better, and is to be converted entirely by the preaching of the Gospel.

For such baseless notion justification has been sought on the ground that it does not—as the true eschatological idea is asserted to do—cut the nerve of missionary endeavor: possibly not, we say, but this world-evolution into all-good puts a rough hand on the mouth of Scripture and reduces it to silence. But does the fact that the world is dashing on to its doom discourage endeavor? Nay, on the contrary, it urges on with the straining of every moral and spiritual muscle to heroic action and self-sacrificing achievement.

The world sweeping along on the down-grade to destruction!—What is the emotion excited thereby? Surely it is no challenge to the Church to stand and wave the white flag of surrender; surely, rather, is it a clarion-call to fling away the scabbard, and to fight hand to hand in order to get into immediate contact with dying sinners and to hold before their eyes the Cross of Jesus. In this holy war there must be neither armistice nor breathing-time, but, instead, the ceaseless roll of the drum, till the last reveille breaks in with its final roll-call of the redeemed!

The withdrawal of the troops from the bat-

tlefield on the plains of earth to their encampment on the hills of glory means the withdrawal also of the Holy Spirit by whom the Church in this conflict with evil has been strengthened and sustained. The withdrawal of the Holy Spirit leaves evil without restraint, and the world, like fruit past its time, worm-breeding, crapulous and effete, is given over to its last burst of wassail and reeling riotous revelry!

Paul's vivid portrayal of the world's moral condition that is to exist immediately before the Coming of Christ is sanctioned throughout by Scripture, and is by the same inspired authority completely confirmed. To picture a moral depravity worse than that of the people before the Flood would be difficult; to fathom an abysmal depth of degradation deeper than that of Sodom and Gomorrah would be no more easy; yet these hotbeds of iniquity, so historical as to become proverbial, are held up by the Lord when He represents the filthy condition—the Alsatian den—in which He should find the world at His returning.

Only so long as the Holy Spirit, now abiding in the Church, remains in the world is there restraint upon evil; and the world under this restraint is obliged to pay tribute to righteousness and to mask its batteries: but the Holy Spirit, ascending with the Church, and no longer holding in check men's turbu-

lent passions, there shall be upon earth a furious outbreak of corruption, there shall come an invasion of evil so sudden, so rapid, so irresistible, that humanity will plunge headlong into a cesspool of pollution and depravity that beggar the resources of language to describe. This world that in the day of God's grace has spurned away His mercy will be permitted to go on till its leprosy is full, and then, with the death-rattle in its throat, the world shall wallow in the filth and froth of the unshored sea of its own hog-wash. To this infernal and final plunge into dissipation the world without shrift and without sacrifice is positively doomed, and only they that are destined to this foul dip resent the unvarnished statement: they travel on with ever-accelerating feet to their doom, all heedless of every warning red flag. With God ignored, the world is but a fool's paradise!

The Man of Sin of whom Paul speaks is no system, nor head of system: he is the agent and personification of Satan; the political "Beast" of Rev. 13:1-10, whose brief but cruel reign over the earth shall demonstrate the utter incapacity of man to rule himself, much less, though invested with Satan's full authority, to exalt himself above the sovereignty of God.

With this demonstration Satan shall not content himself, for, at the close of the mil-

lennial reign of Christ, he shall make another desperate and final attempt to seize, and wrest from God authority over the world; but this attempt shall be cut short with a judgment that shall bring to sudden end all the ages of probation; that shall accomplish Satan's everlasting overthrow, and that shall, on indisputable ground, establish the Imperial Chiefdom, the Eternal Headship, and the Sovereign Authority of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, the Son of God.

Without such demonstration, life's weariness would be but exhaustion through aimless wandering in a labyrinth of bootless routine; life's labor a work of Penelope that raveled by night what she wove by day; life's pleasure and pain, life's hope and fear, life's beginning and end—a mystery, more profound and impenetrable than the Hyrcanian wood of classic mythology.

God, for some wise reason unrevealed, has permitted and allowed the conflict of good and evil to go on without decisive intervention from Him. The mystery of iniquity, even when held in check—as it is and has been by the Spirit of God—has draped the world in mourning; has bathed it in tears, and has driven it moaning on its sorrowful journey all through the years.

An anguished voice alone could now articulate the world's wail of woe that shall swell into a wild cry of overwhelming sorrow,

when the mystery of iniquity is loosed from the bands that now restrain it.

The Man of Sin is not the only black storm-brewing spot on the horizon: there is another, the ecclesiastical "Beast" of Rev. 13: 11-18, called also the "false prophet" in Rev. 16:13; 19:20; 20:10, who exerciseth all the power of the political "Beast"—the Man of Sin.

Under the cruel knout of this dual despotism the world shall be lashed into a frenzy of fury that shall introduce a Reign of Terror, a period of bloodshed and anarchy, the like of which in its appalling horror has never been equaled in the whole history of Mankind.

The Lord Jesus Christ, whose word no man may contradict, says, "Then shall be great tribulation, such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time, no, nor ever shall be"—all stars on the wane! "And except those days should be shortened, there should no flesh be saved: but for the elect's sake those days shall be shortened" (Matt. 24:21, 22). Those days shall be shortened! Were it not for this bit of blue sky low down on the horizon, harbinger of a day clearing, the world might as well abandon all hope, throw the helve after the hatchet and enter the cave of despair. Of course it is easy for optimism to continue buoyant, and even happy: it has but to stop its ears to the moan of the gathering storm; it has but to close

its eyes on Holy Scripture. We should all prefer, no doubt, to listen to the blithe carolling of hope, and its bonnie songs of cheer, than to hear the dolesome and depressing dirges of despair—were it not that the infallible Word of God shows such sunny and jubilant hopefulness to be all false, such winsome and soothing cheer to be all ill-timed.

> "And our hearts, though stout and brave,
> Still like muffled drums are beating
> Funeral marches to the grave."

Nor is the death-procession to be halted, nor the heart-quake to be quietened, by an optimism as blind as a beetle to the facts of existence, and to the revelation of the "only rule of faith and practice"—the Bible. Before earth can lift her voice in tuneful evensong, or kneel in praiseful morning prayer, there has to come the elegy of sorrow and the tolling of her passing bell as the signal of her nearing doom.

In the whole range of the world's other literature there is not to be found language so portentous and so awe-inspiring as that of the Hebrew prophets portraying the advent of "The day of the Lord."

"For the day of the Lord of hosts shall be upon every one that is proud and lofty, and upon every one that is lifted up; and he shall be brought low: and upon all the cedars of Lebanon, that are high and lifted up, and

upon all the oaks of Bashan, and upon all the high mountains, and upon all the hills that are lifted up, and upon every high tower, and upon every fenced wall, and upon all the ships of Tarshish, and upon all pleasant pictures: and the loftiness of man shall be bowed down, and the haughtiness of men shall be made low: and the Lord alone shall be exalted in that day. And the idols he shall utterly abolish. And they shall go into the holes of the rocks, and into the caves of the earth, for fear of the Lord, and for the glory of his majesty, when he ariseth to shake terribly the earth. In that day a man shall cast his idols of silver, and his idols of gold, which they made each one for himself to worship, to the moles and to the bats; to go into the clefts of the rocks, and into the tops of the ragged rocks, for fear of the Lord, and for the glory of his majesty, when he ariseth to shake terribly the earth. Cease ye from man, whose breath is in his nostrils: for wherein is he to be accounted of?" (Is. 2:12-22).

"Behold, the day of the Lord cometh, cruel both with wrath and fierce anger, to lay the land desolate: and he shall destroy the sinners thereof out of it. For the stars of heaven and the constellations thereof shall not give their light: the sun shall be darkened in his going forth, and the moon shall not cause her light to shine. And I will punish the world for their evil, and the wicked for their in-

iquity; and I will cause the arrogancy of the proud to cease, and will lay low the haughtiness of the terrible" (Is. 13:9-11).

"Therefore I will shake the heavens, and the earth shall remove out of her place, in the wrath of the Lord of hosts, and in the day of his fierce anger. And it shall be as the chased roe, and as a sheep that no man taketh up: they shall every man turn to his own people, and flee every one into his own land. Every one that is found shall be thrust through; and every one that is joined unto them shall fall by the sword. Their children also shall be dashed in pieces before their eyes; their houses shall be spoiled, and their wives ravished" (Is. 13:13-16).

"And it shall come to pass, that he who fleeth from the noise of the fear shall fall into the pit; and he that cometh up out of the midst of the pit shall be taken in the snare: for the windows from on high are open, and the foundations of the earth do shake. The earth is utterly broken down, the earth is clean dissolved, the earth is moved exceedingly. The earth shall reel to and fro like a drunkard, and shall be removed like a cottage; and the transgression thereof shall be heavy upon it; and it shall fall, and not rise again" (Is. 24:18-20).

"For, behold, the Lord cometh out of his place to punish the inhabitants of the earth for their iniquity: the earth also shall dis-

close her blood, and shall no more cover her slain" (Is. 26:21).

"Come near, ye nations, to hear; and hearken, ye people: let the earth hear, and all that is therein: the world, and all things that come forth of it. For the indignation of the Lord is upon all nations, and his fury upon all their armies: he hath utterly destroyed them, he hath delivered them to the slaughter. Their slain also shall be cast out, and their stink shall come up out of their carcases, and the mountains shall be melted with their blood. And all the host of heaven shall be dissolved, and the heavens shall be rolled together as a scroll: and all their host shall fall down, as the leaf falleth off from the vine, and as a falling fig from the fig tree. For my sword shall be bathed in heaven: behold, it shall come down upon Idumea, and upon the people of my curse, to judgment" (Is. 34:1-5).

"A noise shall come even to the ends of the earth; for the Lord hath a controversy with the nations, he will plead with all flesh; he will give them that are wicked to the sword, saith the Lord. Thus saith the Lord of hosts, Behold, evil shall go forth from nation to nation, and a great whirlwind shall be raised up from the coasts of the earth. And the slain of the Lord shall be at that day from one end of the earth even unto the other end of the earth: they shall not be lamented,

neither gathered, nor buried; they shall be dung upon the ground" (Jer. 25:31-33).

"Blow ye the trumpet in Zion, and sound an alarm in my holy mountain: let all the inhabitants of the land tremble: for the day of the Lord cometh, for it is nigh at hand; a day of darkness and of gloominess, a day of clouds and of thick darkness, as the morning spread upon the mountains: a great people and a strong; there hath not been ever the like, neither shall be any more after it, even to the years of many generations. The sun shall be turned into darkness, and the moon into blood, before the great and the terrible day of the Lord cometh" (Joel 2:1, 2, 31).

"Woe unto you that desire the day of the Lord! to what end is it for you? the day of the Lord is darkness, and not light. As if a man did flee from a lion, and a bear met him; or went into the house, and leaned his hand on the wall, and a serpent bit him. Shall not the day of the Lord be darkness, and not light? even very dark, and no brightness in it?" (Amos 5:18-20).

"That day is a day of wrath, a day of trouble and distress, a day of wasteness and desolation, a day of darkness and gloominess, a day of clouds and thick darkness, a day of the trumpet and alarm against the fenced cities, and against the high towers. And I will bring distress upon men, that they shall walk like blind men, because they

have sinned against the Lord: and their blood shall be poured out as dust, and their flesh as the dung. Neither their silver nor their gold shall be able to deliver them in the day of the Lord's wrath; but the whole land shall be devoured by the fire of his jealousy: for he shall make even a speedy riddance of all them that dwell in the land" (Zeph. 1: 15-18).

"And in that day will I make Jerusalem a burdensome stone for all people: all that burden themselves with it shall be cut in pieces, though all the people of the earth be gathered together against it. In that day, saith the Lord, I will smite every horse with astonishment, and his rider with madness: and I will open mine eyes upon the house of Judah, and will smite every horse of the people with blindness" (Zech. 12: 3, 4).

"Behold, the day of the Lord cometh, and thy spoil shall be divided in the midst of thee. For I will gather all nations against Jerusalem to battle; and the city shall be taken, and the houses rifled, and the women ravished; and half of the city shall go forth into captivity, and the residue of the people shall not be cut off from the city. Then shall the Lord go forth, and fight against those nations, as when he fought on the day of battle" (Zech. 14: 1-3).

The voice that is sounding in these prophecies is not the dying moan of a storm that

is spent, but it is the whistling warning of a tumult and tempest that are impending. But to that dull roar of thunder rumbling on in the ages past there is in these years of nervous unrest no moment of time to stop and listen. The prophets of peace are patrolling their beat, they are piping the time of a coming irenicon, and this they are doing in blissful unconsciousness to the portentous signs of the times. The people, like the passengers in a titanic ship, sail merrily on though the starlit night: they see not the beacon that burns upon the shore; they hear not the whirr of the stormy petrel's flight far out to sea; they heed not the hum of the death-watch as they go tossing along the deep; but on they go, with ever accelerating speed, to crash and shipwreck!

> "For I doubt not through the ages
> An increasing purpose runs,
> And the thoughts of men are widened
> By the process of the suns."

The thoughts of men! They widen, yes, but they widen into shallows. "Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts: and let him return unto the Lord, and he will have mercy upon him; and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon. For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, saith the Lord" (Is. 55:

7, 8). God's thoughts are alone of consequence to us. Yet His premonitory thoughts, so clearly and so urgently expressed in Scripture, are depreciated, if not despised, by most. Let some watchman of the night, pressed by the authority of God's Word, a voice of warning lift, and considered will he be but a bird of ill omen flapping his disturbing way where the halls are lit for the feast; spoken of will he be as befogged or bereft of his reason, a raving rhapsodist, a weird apparition—a Cassandra of the childish ages past. Even so! Yet better is it to hear the scream of danger from the throat of the bird of ill omen than to be spun without warning by a whirling wind-storm into the roaring cataclysm that is to deluge the world with blood and dip it into the very caldron of the judgment of hell.

An arrogant but obsequious Pharisaism still continues to inquire when the kingdom of God shall come, and a calm and an authoritative voice is giving answer: "As it was in the days of Noah, so shall it be in the days of the Son of man: they ate, they drank, they married, they were given in marriage"—in thoughtless and giddy routine—"until the day that Noah entered into the ark, and the flood came and destroyed them all. Likewise as it was in the days of Lot: they ate, they drank, they bought, they sold, they planted, they builded"—in the same unvary-

ing monotonous round, though in a wider and busier sphere of activity—"but in the day that Lot went forth from Sodom it rained fire and brimstone from heaven, and destroyed them all. After the same manner it shall be in the day in which the Son of man shall be revealed" (Luke 17:26-30).

Judgment! Sudden, swift, irresistible, unsparing: so would it be in the day in which the Son of man should be revealed. While Abraham from the heights of Hebron watches the threatening clouds that are piling on the plain of Jordan, Lot, his eyes blinded with the sulphurous reek of the city, still sits at the gates of Sodom, sits there and continues in his arduous endeavor to "milk the ram."

But where the carcase is, there the vultures circle around: where the caldron of corruption steams, thither the flames of judgment roll. What is the outlook?—common query among the sons of men. Well, in one word, according to God's own chart of time, the outlook for this world is—Doom!

CHAPTER XVII

The Messiah of Glory

THE hour and the power of darkness are alike limited. Man's day upon the earth, a day that over the garden of Eden dawned so calmly and serenely, but that was so soon shadowed, lies under a pall of ever deepening darkness until in blinding mist and swirling storm of sorrow it closes.

In the midst of the generations there is raised the Cross, and here God stoops and binds round the stricken world the crimson bands of its redemption.

"The Lamb that was slain" is "The Lion of Judah"; under His imperial scepter of righteousness does the earth return to God.

Bel boweth down, Nebo stoopeth; they stoop, they bow down together; they could not deliver the burden, but themselves are gone into captivity: therefore hearken unto me, saith the Lord, "I bring near my righteousness; it shall not be far off, and my salvation shall not tarry: and I will place salvation in Zion for Israel my glory" (Is. 46:13).

> This band Jehovah wreathes of light
> On beetling brow of Earth's dread night.

John the beloved disciple is permitted, for

his writing's sake, as none other of the twelve are, to "tarry" with us until the Lord shall come.

"For the word of God, and for the testimony of Jesus Christ" John is banished to Patmos, a dreary and desolate island, whose rock-bound shores are washed and swept day and night by the deathless surge of the sea.

Of the disciples of Jesus, John had outlived all the others. They like sheep in the shambles have been all slaughtered. James has fallen under the executioner's axe; Paul has fought a good fight, and is gone; Peter, John's life-long friend, has slipped away, too. He had gone on with unfaltering feet, the Lord's last words "follow thou me" sounding in his soul, until, stretching forth his hands, another had girded him, and nailed him head downward to a cross—"right position", said Chrysostom, "for walking the skies!" With these and other holy memories, tender and dear, of by-gone days, John is now alone.

Since the ascension of Jesus there has been on the part of heaven no decisive intervention in behalf of the saints on earth. The mystery of iniquity, though under restraint of the Holy Spirit, has been permitted to work, and the same malign working is to continue till, the Church having been formed and removed to heaven, all restraint is taken away, and "the end of the age" is ushered

in. This end of the age! this most momentous epoch in the history of the world! this crisis of all time! On this period the light of prophecy, which has scattered its beams along the ages, converges to a focus, and burns like a star in the "thick darkness" that covers the earth in the day of the Lord's fierce anger.

John the Baptist, true to his commission as a prophet of the kingdom, has introduced the King under the figure of one who, fan in hand, separates the chaff from the wheat, and thoroughly purges his threshing-floor.

John the Apostle, true to his mission as one that should tarry until the Lord come, throws wide open the door of heaven, and reveals the King whose mighty fan is now to winnow the chaff from the wheat: the chaff to be burned with unquenchable fire; the wheat to be gathered into the garner.

The earth has been baptized with the Holy Ghost in order that the Messiah of Sorrow may see of the travail of His soul, and be satisfied: so likewise the earth must be baptized also with fire in order that through the lifted gates there may come in the King of Glory.

The Messiah of the Apocalypse is the Messiah of Glory. He, in the consummation of the ages, stands alone: the Alpha and the Omega, the Beginning and the Ending, the First and the Last, the Faithful Witness, the First Be-

getter of the dead! and—in the universality of His dominion and the sovereign majesty of His Masterdom, the Prince of the kings of the earth.

In the Book of Revelation He is revealed: first, in His relationship to the Church—chapters 1-3; second, in His sovereign authority over "the end of the age"—chapters 4-18; third, in His triumphal Return as the Messiah of Glory—chapters 19-20; and, finally, in His Eternal Absolutism as The Father of Eternity, The Prince of Peace—chapters 21-22.

As the pursuivant of this Revelation, John is to tarry till the Lord shall come.

Significant is it that after the third chapter of Revelation there is no further mention of the Church. Her annals are examined, probed, analyzed, with the spiritual acumen, the calm impartiality, the grasp and breadth of mind of Him that is to be her Judge: the records of twenty centuries are searched, colligated, and sifted; and from the residuum there is compiled an abstract that is easily digested in the seven brief Letters to the seven churches in Asia: a compend embalming what is of permanent worth and importance, and showing the work of the Church historian to be—save as a matter of passing interest—a labor of Sisyphus, up hill and down again forever!

The fourth chapter of Revelation opens

wide a door in heaven, through which the Church, clothed in white, crowned and enthroned, is seen now in resurrection glory. She is with the King, with whom she is to return to the earth after its great baptism of fire.

The earth below is a stage, glimmering in the garish foot-lights of the pit, on which there is being enacted a tragedy of iniquity, so fierce in its outbreak of rebellion against God, that it commands the very silence of heaven, and invokes the decisive intervention of Jehovah. The whole government of God is set in action. Thunders peal, lightnings flash, voices are heard; omnipotent forces, direful, astounding, awe-inspiring, are let loose: but all is under perfect governmental control. The seven-sealed book, the book of the divine counsels, is in the hands—the nail-pierced hands—of Jesus, the Lion of Judah, the Root of David, the Lamb that was slain, the Messiah of Glory, to whom with unreserved authority and power there is given the administration of the government of God.

The first seal is broken, and the earth's baptism of fire begins. The judgments that follow are heaven's answer to earth's defiant challenge. These judgments are the fulfilment of the Old Testament prophecies that, in discontinuity during the age of grace, now —the age of grace having passed—resume their course and flow on to their completion.

They are judgments that are poured out upon the earth after the removal of the Church from it, and they are judgments that are continuous and cumulating, reaching their crisis in the Coming of the Messiah of Glory.

The Church is, beyond a peradventure, to be taken from the earth before these judgments fall, and every interpreter that does not take this fact into consideration is either bewildered, or is utterly baffled. The Lord having appeared, and the Church having been received up to meet Him, there is thrown upon the earth a pall of darkness that precedes the revelation of the Messiah of Glory to Israel. (Is. 60: 1-3.) During this tribulation period the world, under the weight of its accumulated sins, shall sink into a seething, yeasty pool of bottomless corruption. To this period of the earth's retribution refer Revelation chapters four to eighteen inclusive, and to this period only. No other reading of prophecy, except its language is forced, is in the least degree intelligible. The historical interpreters of the Book of Revelation that have sought to distribute the judgments of this period through the ages of Christianity have performed an Herculean task, but their illogical and conflicting conclusions are enough for the conviction that all such attempts must prove hopelessly futile. It is impossible to prove that black is white, or that white is black, thus per-

vert the truth by sophistry. Scripture reveals one time, and only one time, to which such penal infliction can refer: it is the "end of the age," the consummation of man's day, the time of the earth's purgation, the preparation of "The day of the Lord."

The sudden and violent outburst of revolutionary forces on the earth, the roaring tempest of struggling anguish, the sweeping changes in governmental and social conditions during this tribulation period, no power can curb, no voice can quell, no wisdom can direct, save that of the Lion of Judah, the Root of David, the Lamb that was slain, the Messiah of Glory. No decree other than His could out of such chaos order bring; no revendication other than His could such a raging tide of iniquity check and turn back; no sword other than His could such furious onslaught of hell reach and rout.

In that day "the host of heaven shall be dissolved, and the heavens shall be rolled together as a scroll: and all their host shall fall down, as the leaf falleth off from the vine, and as a falling fig from the fig tree: for my sword shall be bathed in heaven" (Is. 34: 4, 5).

Bathed in heaven! What an awe-inspiring phrase! No conflict with men is the Messiah of Glory waging: He is storming the gates of hell; He is pouring a broadside into the panoplied power of evil. Men suffer, but only be-

cause they have failed to take refuge in Him before He unsheathed His sword and bathed it in heaven, that the very sources as well as the agencies of evil might be searched out by Him. Resistance there is in certain quarters to the thought of a "Warrior-King," Jehovah Sabaoth—The Lord of Armies; and contempt is but thinly veiled in naming Him "Israel's War-God." What would they have? A God impotent? Evil entrenched, inexpugnable, imperdible? But who is this King of Glory? Jesus, Jehovah Sabaoth—He is the King of Glory! Alleluia; Salvation, and glory, and honor, and power, unto the Lord our God!

What sword other than His could pierce the panoply of evil? "Canst thou draw out leviathan with an hook? The sword of him that layeth at him cannot hold." But "he that made him can make his sword to approach unto him."

"In that day the Lord with his sore and great and strong sword shall punish leviathan the piercing serpent, even leviathan that crooked serpent" (Is. 27:1).

The sword is drawn, and is bathed in heaven, not for the merciless slaughter of men, but for to quell the hosts of hell that from the depths of earth are now attempting to scale the heights of heaven. What sword other than Messiah's could cut down and nullify principalities and powers, could vanquish

the rulers of the darkness of this world, could lay prostrate wicked spirits in heavenly places, could deal destruction to the Beast and False Prophet, and could rout out that old serpent, which is the Devil, and Satan, and send him shivered and shivering to his doom? Surely that sword is alone in its glory as is the Person of Him Who wields it. There is no outburst, nor is there the least trace of ungovernable anger in the infliction of these judgments: deliberately do they fall, in measured sequence, stroke upon stroke!

During this whole period, while hell in defiance of heaven is belching out fire and recoiling and retching under returning judgments, there is merciful provision made for those that, through their rejection of Christ, plunged into this sea of trouble, but that now under the pain of penalty repent of their sin and sue for pardon. Vast numbers of these are saved, as the seventh chapter of Revelation assures us: an elect number of the twelve tribes of Israel, and also "a great multitude, which no man could number, of all nations, and kindreds, and peoples, and tongues," which come out of the great tribulation, having "washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb."

The Beast and the False Prophet, and their infatuated followers, refuse to surrender; they cry not for mercy, they plead neither for pardon nor reprieve, and under the ruth-

less scourge of Satan they are whipped to the hoisting of their black flag over the notorious battlefield of Armageddon. This battlefield, stretching over the plain of Jezreel, has been the witness of many a bitter and brutal conflict, and to this blood-soaked field the Beast and his armies are driven in a delirium of despair to grapple with the very Godhead!

The city of Jerusalem, selected and set apart by covenant and oath as the royal city of the King, is the storm center of the tribulation period; as the land of Israel is the storm zone of that "day of Jacob's trouble." Of the city of Jerusalem there are recorded in the Bible two sieges: one, that of Titus, when the city was sacked and burned; the other, that of the Beast, when the city shall be taken (Zech. 14:1), but not destroyed (Zech. 14:2). During this assault, while the sack of the city is in progress, the Beast, for some reason—either vexed with the outbreak of revolutionary forces elsewhere (Dan. 11:44), or alarmed by portentous signs in the heavens (Joel 2:30, 31)—raises the siege, and with his army falls back to the plain of Jezreel. Of the terrific conflict that ensues, a detailed account—even if this were possible—would be of little spiritual profit: we only know that here there meet in the shock of battle earth's nations, whose arbitrament, little suspected and less desired by the contend-

ing forces, is to come through an unsolicited and decisive intervention of high heaven.

The concentration of these revolutionary forces at Armageddon, howeversomuch it may seem like the ordinary going forth of kings to battle, is in reality brought about by the working of unclean and malignant demons. John, in the Book of Revelation, says that he saw "out of the mouth of the dragon, and out of the mouth of the beast, and out of the mouth of the false prophet, three unclean spirits, like frogs; for they are spirits of demons, doing signs, which go forth unto the kings of the whole habitable earth to gather them together unto the war of the great day of God Almighty. (Behold, I come as a thief. Blessed is he that watcheth and keepth his garments, lest he walk naked and they see his shame.) And he gathered them together unto the place called in the Hebrew tongue, Har-Magedon" (Rev. 16:13-16).

In this gathering human history, therefore, reaches its war-crisis, the world-conflict for which the armaments of the nations, in the face of all deprecation and proposed mediation, are being prepared: and the "frogs" that John saw, represent the hell-born spirit by which these armies are led and assembled to meet in struggle for life or death. Nations shall rise against nations in their last attempt to settle their age-long controversy, but in this clash of arms, this battle royal, these na-

tions shall encounter more than they expect; they shall collide with God!

Then "shall appear the sign of the Son of man in heaven: and then shall all the tribes of the earth mourn, and they shall see the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory. And he shall send his angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and they shall gather together his elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other" (Matt. 24:30, 31).

The apocalyptic Rider of the war-horse is no optical illusion, no symbol of spiritual conquest, no ambiguous metaphor, no hallucination of the disordered brain of an exiled Christian. This Rider is the Messiah of Glory, Jesus of Nazareth, the Son of David, the King of Israel, the Son of God, King of kings and Lord of lords. Hallelujah!

He comes even as the Chant of the Second Advent foretells:

"The cleaving heavens shall disclose the Lord
Jesus
Attended by the angel-ministers of His power,
Encircled with glowing flame,
In act to wreak vengeance on those nations who
Know not God,
On those Jews who refuse obedience to the
Glad-tidings
Of our Lord Jesus.
Such men shall reap retribution,
Irrevocable destruction that bans them the
Presence of the Lord,

That glorious vision of His might that shall be
Unveiled
When He descends to be encompassed with
Glory,
The glory-host of His Holy Ones,
Comes to be the World's Wonder,
Haloed about by all that have believed on Him,
In that Day."
(2 Thess. 1: 7-12, Way's Translation.)

By such decisive intervention, and in no other way, is the world's rebellion to be broken, and the Messiah's kingdom to be established.

The Lord's Return is heralded by a trumpet-blast, and great voices are heard in heaven, saying, "The world-kingdom of our Lord and of his Christ has come; and he shall reign unto the ages of ages" (Rev. 11: 15 Gr.).

The kingdom, so long dishonored by the maladministration of men, is first purged of its iniquity, and then in power set up and established.

The Beast and the False Prophet are taken and are "cast alive into the lake of fire that burneth with brimstone": this is hell, never before opened, and into it the Beast and the False Prophet are the first to go.

Following the doom of the Beast and the False Prophet their followers pass under review of a more deliberate assize—judgment being passed by the Word of God—and from the decision rendered by this high court of

judicature there is no appeal. He that deliberates and adjudicates is the One that long ago said: "He that rejecteth me, and receiveth not my words, hath one that judgeth him: the word that I have spoken, the same shall judge him in the last day" (John 12:48).

His word, so gracious and so winsome, is to be found by its rejecters to be the only witness against them in the last day. How solemn the day of grace in which man by his own choice beforehand determines his unalterable destiny for eternity!

The followers of the Beast are slain with the sword—the symbol of the Word of God. This judgment effectuates the deliverance of Jerusalem: the Jews in Palestine look upon Him "whom they have pierced, and they shall mourn for him, as one mourneth for his only son, and shall be in bitterness for him, as one that is in bitterness for his firstborn" (Zech. 12:10).

Following the destruction of the invading hosts on the plain of Jezreel, Satan is now taken and is bound with a great chain, and thus bethralled in manacle and in gyve, he is shut up in the "pit of the abyss"—an underground cell—(the "abyss" suggesting that the "pit" may lie somewhere below the watery waste of the ocean) and there in close confinement Satan is kept during the thousand years of the Messianic reign over the earth. (Rev. 20:1-3.)

Nature, too, during these solemn judgments, is, like the nations of men, thrown into, and rocked in, the throes of convulsion. There is a violent earthquake: the cities of the nations fall (Rev. 16:18, 19); the mount of Olives palpitates and is riven in twain. The Messiah, who was seen in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory, is now seen standing on this mount of Olives even while it is being rent asunder; for "his feet shall stand in that day upon the mount of Olives, which is before Jerusalem on the east, and the mount of Olives shall cleave in the midst thereof toward the east and toward the west, and there shall be a very great valley; and half of the mountain shall remove toward the north, and half of it toward the south" (Zech. 14:4); and the people, horror-struck and in fear, "shall flee to the valley of the mountains; for the valley of the mountains shall reach unto Azal: yea, they shall flee, like as they fled from before the earthquake in the days of Uzziah, king of Judah" (Zech. 14:5).

And the sun shall become black as sackcloth of hair, and the moon shall become as blood; and the stars of heaven shall fall unto the earth, even as a fig tree casteth her untimely figs, when she is shaken of a mighty wind. And the heaven shall depart as a scroll when it is rolled together; and every mountain and island shall be moved out of their places. And the kings of the earth, and the great men, and

the rich men, and the chief captains, and the mighty men, and every bondman, and every freeman, shall hide themselves in the dens and in the rocks of the mountains; and shall say to the mountains and rocks, "Fall on us, and hide us from the face of him that sitteth on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb: for the great day of his wrath is come; and who shall be able to stand?" (Rev. 6: 12-17).

And He shall send His angels a-trumpeting to the four corners of the earth, to gather together the twelve tribes of Israel (Matt. 24: 31); and they shall awake and sing, they that dwell in the dust: for their "dew is as the dew of herbs, and the earth shall cast out the dead" (Is. 26: 19).

"And before him shall be gathered all nations: and he shall separate them one from another, as a shepherd divideth his sheep from the goats" (Matt. 25: 31); and in this judgment He shall purge His kingdom, and shall lift over the long desolated earth His scepter of righteousness. "Then shall the King say unto them on his right hand, Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world" (Matt. 25: 34).

There shall be a triumphal entry of the King into the city of Jerusalem, and one that shall be in exact fulfilment of Zechariah's prophecy. Without any abridgment of the

prophecy, as in Matthew's record of the entry of the dis-crowned King, the King now honored and acclaimed shall enter the city, "just and having salvation." In heaven received has He the kingdom that was refused Him on earth, and here upon earth does He, in the consummation of the ages, return to establish the kingdom in the place of His rejection. Where first He sought it there He returns in power and glory to administer it.

"I saw in the night visions, and, behold, one like the Son of man came with the clouds of heaven, and came to the Ancient of days, and they brought him near before him. And there was given him dominion, and glory, and a kingdom, that all people, nations, and languages, should serve him: his dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and his kingdom that which shall not be destroyed" (Dan. 7:13, 14).

The Lord Jesus Christ takes the kingdom by Redemption (Col. 1); by Conquest (Psa. 2); by Covenant and Oath—as the Son of David (Psa. 89); by Obedience unto Death—as the Son of Abraham, the antitypical Isaac (Phil. 2); by Personal Right—as the Son of man (Psa. 8); and by Inheritance—as the Son of God (Heb. 1).

These titles, with differing diadems and differing glories, all combine in the one Glory of Him who through life and death and vic-

tory has in His own blessed Person joined, in one indissoluble unity, God and man.

THIS IS JESUS OF NAZARETH, THE KING OF THE JEWS

This title, indelible and indefeasible, written across the brow of the Cross, not obliterated nor canceled nor forgotten, is, in superexaltation and surpassing glory, now woven into the vesture that is dipped in blood, and it proclaims the Eternal Absolutism of Him that is, in the counsels of God,

KING OF KINGS AND LORD OF LORDS.

This title, indefectible forever, sealed and made sure by innumerable witnesses, secures and insures the stability of the Kingdom that is to be established and governed by the Messiah of Glory.

"And his name shall be called A Wonder, Counsellor, The Mighty God, The Father of Eternity, The Prince of Peace" (Is. 9:7).

"Lift up your heads, O ye gates;
And be ye lift up, ye everlasting doors;
And the King of Glory shall come in.
Who is this King of Glory?
The Lord strong and mighty, the Lord Mighty in battle.
Lift up your heads, O ye gates;
Even lift them up, ye everlasting doors;
And the King of Glory shall come in.
Who is this King of Glory?
The LORD OF HOSTS, He is THE KING OF GLORY.
(Psalm 24.)

CHAPTER XVIII

Eternal Absolutism

THE subjugation of the kingdoms of this world, and their submission to the authority of Christ—this is the rounding up and completion of all the Messianic prophecies. In the Messiah is vested sovereign jurisdiction over the whole world.

The twelve tribes of Israel are restored and renationalized; David's throne is reconstructed; Jerusalem is the central seat of the Messiah's government. His régime is characterized as a rule and reign of righteousness: the inner spirit and governing principles of the kingdom being those enunciated in the Sermon on the Mount. The King is engirt with majesty and power and glory, for He is plenipotent to put down all evil and to relieve all sorrow.

Such, then, is the kingdom by prophets foretold; such, then, the kingdom by apostles expected. It must never be forgotten, either, that adown the ages these apostles have been often blamed—nay, verily, have been rebuked—for having and holding opinions—opinions of this kingdom—that Scripture all through is defending and maintaining.

These disciples—so it is said by modernists—"were forever thinking of a temporal per-

sonal reign, and the high positions they were to occupy, and the important part they were to play in it. They disputed by the way, which should be greatest. Two of them asked that they might sit, the one on Christ's right hand, and the other on His left, in the kingdom. The last question they asked before He ascended up on high was: 'Wilt thou at this time restore the kingdom to Israel?' And He was forever correcting and teaching them—'The kingdom of God cometh not with observation'; 'The kingdom of God is within you'; 'My kingdom is not of this world.' His kingdom is a spiritual kingdom. He began to set it up and establish it while here. It came with great power on the day of Pentecost, and has been growing and will grow until the stone cut out of the mountain without hands shall fill the whole earth. For this He teaches us to pray, 'Thy kingdom come.' Christ is now on His throne seated at the right hand of the majesty on high."

Such an unrelieved indictment of the disciples is so utterly fallacious, so contradictory to Scripture, that it is unworthy of serious notice, except it be seized in order to illustrate the dangerous and daring presumption of those that, for the sake of building up an erroneous interpretation, ruthlessly and recklessly make use of a text with no reference whatever to its context. There is here, too, a warning against this handling of the Word of

God deceitfully; for it is a serious matter, and it may be of grave consequences, to make a false charge against the apostles, and to base that charge on a misconstruction of Scripture. It is at least careless—if it is not criminal—to say that the disciples "were forever thinking of a temporal personal reign"; and that Jesus "was forever correcting and teaching them—'The kingdom of God cometh not with observation'; 'The kingdom of God is within you'; 'My kingdom is not of this world.'" Correcting them—Where?

The aforementioned citations, which are taken from Luke 17:20, 21; John 18:36, and which are offered in evidence that Jesus "was forever teaching" the disciples these things, are composed of words that were spoken to the Pharisees, and to Pilate: to the disciples the words have neither reference nor application. It is only through gross perversion of their meaning, and by ruthless disregard of the context, that these scriptures are adduced in evidence that Jesus "was forever correcting and teaching" His disciples, who "were forever thinking of a temporal personal reign."

The facts are these: the disciples of Jesus, as well as the whole national party in Israel, had the most intense conviction that the Messiah would restore the literal kingdom to Israel. And in this they were right. Their conviction the Lord never denied, nor rebuked:

not once. How could it, then, be derived from an erroneous conception? A conviction it was that was founded on the general and united testimony of the prophets—a conviction that the Messiah, who was to be of the seed of David according to the flesh, was to sit on David's throne, and was to be Israel's national Deliverer.

Two of the disciples, James and John, through their mother, asked from Jesus the award of places of honor in the kingdom. But Jesus does not charge and rebuke them for holding a carnal and false view of this kingdom. He, on the contrary, confirms their view, when He answers, saying, "To sit on my right hand, and on my left, is not mine to give, but for whom it hath been prepared of my Father" (Matt. 20:23).

Let every word of this answer be well weighed, for it did not discourage the thought of a literal kingdom, nor was it intended to do so. Such a kingdom, implied, surely, if not expressed in the Lord's answer, there was—and is—to be, and in it there were—and are—to be positions of honor for those for whom such has been prepared of the Father. Most difficult is it to conceive how any one could by any means understand this scripture to be a disavowal and negation of a literal kingdom, for this scripture is rather the asserting of and avouching such a kingdom.

As to the question put to Jesus just before

His ascension—"Lord, wilt thou at this time restore again the kingdom to Israel?"—there is not the most remote intimation in the Lord's reply, of the disciples having a wrong conception of the kingdom. Jesus did not then, nor did He at any other time, utter one word that can be construed into a "correction" of the Apostles' thought of a literal kingdom. In His answer to their question He simply declares that it is not for them to know the times or the seasons, which the Father hath put in His own power. Here again is the thought of a temporal kingdom affirmed instead of denied: confirmed instead of corrected.

The obsequious Pharisees, in their cynical satire, demand of Him, when the kingdom of God should come; and "He answered them and said, The kingdom of God cometh not with observation: neither shall they say, Lo here! or, lo there! for, behold, the kingdom of God is within you"—or, as in the alternative reading of the revised version —"is in the midst of you" (Luke 17: 20, 21).

The question was a contemptible quip expressing the questioners' real scorn and sarcasm. They were virtually saying, Where is the kingdom that you came to establish? Not a sign of it see we. Neither army nor navy have you. Your followers are but a few Galileans, proverbially illiterate and rude.

Coming of the promised kingdom! When is it to come?

The Jew, especially the Pharisaic Jew, was looking impatiently for Rome's overthrow, and for the reëstablishment of David's dynasty, through force and revolution. Of such an uprising, then, there was no sign. Poor and unarmed were the disciples of Jesus, and the Pharisees, declining to accept the Messianic signs that accredited Him, veiled but thinly their contempt in this their question about the kingdom. But Jesus—ever patient with them—answered and said, "The kingdom of God cometh not with observation." The word translated "observation" means "watchful expectancy" or "outward show." Not with this "watchful expectancy," nor with this "outward show," is to come the kingdom of God. Nor, are they to say, "Lo here! or, lo there! for, behold, the kingdom of God" is to be in the midst of them: it is to come, come suddenly, and without any warning. Certain is it that Jesus, in thus speaking, speaks not of a "spiritual kingdom" in the "hearts of believers": He is addressing Himself to Pharisees, self-righteous hypocrites, whose hearts would prove an uncanny and lightless realm for a "spiritual" kingdom. Moreover, the double expression—"Lo here!" and "lo there!"—is later interpreted in the Lord's instruction to His own disciples. "And they shall say unto you, See here; or, see there:

go not after them, nor follow them"; they must not be deluded by any such pronouncement: "for as the lightning, that lighteneth out of the one part under heaven, shineth unto the other part under heaven; so shall also the Son of man be in his day" (Luke 17: 23, 24).

In this manner, then, is the kingdom to come. No "watchful expectancy" can its coming detect; no "outward show" can herald its approach: there is the blare of no summoning bugle, the blast of no marshalling trumpet, the tramp of no marching army, the flashing and clashing of no drawn swords; nor is anything of the emblazonings of conquering advance to herald the advent of this coming Empire. Suddenly is it to come, instantaneously like the lightning-flash. When the blinding zig-zag of fire leaps out of the darkened sky, there is no time, as there is no need, for the beholders to cry, That is lightning! It writes its own name on every soul by its awful blaze! A voice lifted up before it, saying, Lo here! or, lo there! is impossible, and the saying that has time to be said is thus self-convicted of error!

Is it not strange that any one could conceive of such a scripture conveying the thought of a "spiritual kingdom in the hearts of believers"? Is it not as sad as it is strange?

Another text that is pulled forward by

them that are in revolt against the thought of a kingdom verily literal, is our Lord's answer to Pilate, "My kingdom is not of this world." But this scripture can be used as a prop for the delusive and illusive idea of a kingdom spiritual only by wilful misunderstanding, only by deliberate misconstruction, only by some mental twist and perversion, all or any of which are misleading and wicked. The denying of a kingdom temporal and literal cannot do other than disparage the Word of God; the denying of a kingdom temporal and literal cannot do other than depreciate the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ, who, by the common consent of the prophets and of the apostles, was, according to the flesh, of the house and lineage of David, and who, as David's Heir, was to rule over a kingdom that should have no end.

"The kingdom"—it is said by these same spiritualizing commentators—"the kingdom came with great power on the day of Pentecost, and has been growing and will grow until the stone cut out of the mountain without hands shall fill the whole earth. For this He teaches us to pray, 'Thy kingdom come.' Christ is now on His throne seated at the right hand of the majesty on high."

Such is the thought of tradition, but if it were true, it would be subversive of the entire structure of sacred prophecy. If the

kingdom came "with great power" nearly twenty centuries ago, why should we be taught to pray for its coming? We are told that the kingdom is here, that it is growing, that it will continue to grow until the stone cut out of the mountain—a figure that is erroneously thought to be a symbol of the Gospel—shall fill the whole earth.

The Church, strangely blind to such a false construction, and under the illusion that she is the "stone" that is to smite the image, is positively obsessed with the idea that she is to expand by natural—or forced—evolution into a great kingdom, and is to fill the whole earth. But against this thought the Scripture is in absolute and unqualified opposition, and it is sheer folly to say that something is so, when Scripture says that it is not so. What is gained by asserting what Scripture denies? by affirming what Scripture negatives? The "stone" that smites the world-colossus is, not the Church, but the Christ! By a single, sudden, and shattering blow the world-kingdoms fall, and immediately thereafter the smiting-stone becomes a great mountain and fills the whole earth. By no gradual process are the kingdoms of this world brought under subordination to Christ. These kingdoms under the malign leadership of the Beast, at the end of the age, fall foul of Christ, and then He strikes, and He strikes hard, and under the dynamic energy of that

impact the vaunted "powers" become "like the chaff of the summer threshingfloors," and the wind carries them away. In this manner, and in no other, the Messianic kingdom is to be inaugurated.

The Messianic reign institutes, constitutes, and characterizes the Kingdom-Age, during which the redeemed of the present dispensation are to be here upon the earth, and are to reign over the earth with Christ. Fidelity in service now while the King is away, is the measure of their capacity to reign when the King comes back.

It will be observed that when there is made the contrast between the Parable of the Talents (Matt. 25:14-30), and the Parable of the Pounds (Luke 19:11-27), Matthew portrays the wisdom and sovereignty of the giver that varies his gifts according to the aptitude of his servants; while Luke sets forth more especially the responsibility of the servants that receive each the same sum, the one servant, by the use of his pound in the master's interest, gaining more than the other servant: accordingly, it is not said in Luke's Gospel, as it is in Matthew's, "Enter thou into the joy of thy Lord"—the same thing to all the servants, and the more excellent thing; but here it is to the one servant the award of authority over ten cities, and to the other, over five: that is to say, each receives recompense proportionate to his service. Not

lost to the servant is that which he has gained: for, though the gain was his Master's, the servant enjoys it. But it is the opposite with the servant that made no use of his pound: the pound that was entrusted to him is taken from him, and is given to the one that had gained ten pounds.

So the theological deduction is legitimately drawn that increase in divine intelligence and conscious knowledge of God in power, is not at all lost in the coming Kingdom-Age. On the contrary, it is more and more that we receive, and there is given to us the glory of the inheritance according to, and in proportion to, our personal work. But for all that, everything is of grace, and evermore of grace. Little do we appreciate this wondrous grace of the Lord Jesus: He that furnishes the capital with which we trade, He that at the final reckoning credits to our own personal account, and not to His, the increment gained by our trading.

Through obedience and through service did the Lord Jesus Christ acquire dominion. "He humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross. Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him the name which is above every name: that in the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven and things in earth and things under the earth; and that every tongue should confess that Jesus

Christ is Lord to the glory of God the Father'' (Phil. 2:8-11).

In the same manner do we, through obedience and through service, acquire capacity to rule in the now-nearing day of His glory. The Kingdom-Age, glorious thus as it is, is not the earth's final state, but it is, like the present Age, a sphere of stewardship.

Our Lord, when He was here upon the earth, exercised the office of a Prophet: He, in heaven, now exercises the office of a Priest; and He is coming again in order that here upon the earth He may exercise the office of a King. Whether, then, in humiliation —as He was when here upon earth, rejected and scourged and crowned with thorns; or in grace—as He is now, living yonder and interceding, having passed through the heavens; or in glory—as He shall be when He returns to the earth, received and honored, and with diadems pressing His brow: whether, in a word, in humiliation or in grace or in glory, He is the One and evermore the One and the Same blessed Person, the Servant of the Father's will. To the Father He, as Prophet and Priest and King, puts in an accounting. ''He must reign, till he hath put all enemies under his feet'' (1 Cor. 15:25). This is the measuring line majestic that delineates and defines Imperialism and Christ.

All this may be pre-viewed now, by simple faith, and the vision can be as clear now as

when, in the full glory of its reality, it is taken in by the bodily eye hereafter.

"We see not yet all things put under him. But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honor" (Heb. 2: 8, 9).

Behold, all things cosmical, whether they be things celestial or whether they be things terrestrial, are now moving on in irresistible might—on to that consummation infinitely glorious. This progression of the Ages no power can stay. In their unfolding is to be disclosed the final cause of redemption.

"Look unto me, and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth: for I am God, and there is none else. I have sworn by myself, the word has gone out of my mouth in righteousness, and shall not return, That unto me every knee shall bow, every tongue shall swear. Surely, shall one say, in the Lord have I righteousness and strength: even to him shall men come; and all that are incensed against him shall be ashamed. In the Lord shall all the seed of Israel be justified, and shall glory" (Is. 45: 23-25).

Imperialism and Christ are, therefore, not problematical, but demonstrably sure, and these are as intervolved and inseparable as are the eternal counsels from which they unroll.

Christ must reign, till all things are put un-

der Him. To His absolute and unlimited power there is no exception, save, of course, the Father, who puts all things into subjection under His Son; and this relational status is merged finally into the Eternal Absolutism that is His birth-right share forever with the Father, to whom He shall deliver up the kingdom, after it has served its purpose.

In the ordinances of the over-ruling heavens of myriad systems and suns and stars, two movements there are: the one circular, with orbit measurable; the other onward, with orbit immeasurable, into infinite space. But the sweep of these heavenly bodies, whether circular or onward, is controlled by the attraction of their central sun. So, too, the Ages are revolving around their central Sun, Jesus-Jehovah, and by Him they are held in their course, and return to the place whence they set out. When their trust they have discharged; when the counsels of grace and of glory they have made manifest; when the purpose for which they were originated they have served fully; when the restitution of all things has been through them accomplished: then, and not till then, at that great hour and not before, delivered up are they to the Father, in order that He may be All in All.

"Vast as is the course which Scripture has traced, it has been *a circle* still; and in that most perfect form comes back to the point

from which it started. The heaven which had disappeared since the third chapter of Genesis reappears in the latest chapters of the Revelation. The tree of life again stands by the river of the water of life, and again there is no more curse."

"Even the very differences of the forms under which the heavenly kingdom reappears are deeply characteristic, marking, as they do, not merely that all is won back, but won back in a more glorious shape than that in which it was lost, because won back *in the Son*. It is no longer Paradise, but the new Jerusalem; no longer the Garden, but the City of God; no longer the Garden, free, spontaneous, and unlabored, as man's blessedness in the estate of a first innocence would have been, but the City, costlier indeed, more stately and more glorious, but at the same time the result of toil and pains, reared into a nobler and more abiding habitation, yet with stones which—after the pattern of the 'elect cornerstone'—were, each in its time, laboriously hewn and painfully squared for the places which they fill."

"But, having reached the delivering up of the kingdom, we are on the borders of the 'new heavens' and the 'new earth.' The heavens and the earth which are now will have been the scene of the Son's exercised energies, and the witness of His perfections in grace and in glory, in humiliation and in

power, in the services of the Servant, the Priest, and the King, in the life of faith and in the lordship of all things. And when the Son has been thus displayed, as in weakness and in strength, as on earth and in heaven, from the manger to the throne, as the Nazarene and the Bethlehemite, the Lamb of God and the anointed Lord of all, according to predestination of eternal counsels, these heavens and earth which now are will have done all they had to do; *when they have continued unto this display of the Son, they have continued long enough.* They may give place; and the soul that has surveyed them as having accomplished such service may be prepared to hear from the lips of the prophet: 'I saw a new heaven and a new earth: for the first heaven and the first earth were passed away' " (Rev. 21:1).

In these reflections have we indeed complete fellowship. Whatever is lying beyond the Kingdom-Age, in that vast sweep of Eternity, is veiled in the majestic language of the closing words of the Apocalypse. Yet through the veil does the glory enshrined in the language break forth. No longer is this earth deluged with blood; no longer estranged from God; no longer the battlefield of hate and of love; no longer the treadmill of toil; no longer the scene of our sorrows, the grave of our dead, the place of our ever-falling tears: no longer is the heaven clothed with

sackcloth—the token of God's anger; no longer is it the source of the storm and the tempest, the pealing thunder, the sheeted lightning, the pitiless hail. The first earth, unloved, unlamented, has passed all away.

To the new and the purified earth there comes down from God out of the now peaceful heaven the holy city, the New Jerusalem, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. This is the Eternal City, the home of the glorified, the royal seat of God. Sin and its curse are under His ban for ever and ever!

No more separating sea! no more death! no more sorrow! no more crying! no more pain! no more curse! no more night! Seven soul-thrilling negatives that stretch like the strings of an eolian harp in heaven's window, and over them the gentle winds come sweeping, softening earth's long threnody into heaven's hymn of praise! In exchange for weeds and willows there have been given the white robes and the palms.

In Christ, the Lamb of God, Absolutism, infinite, unchangeable, eternal, is revived and forever established. Eternal Absolutism! The Prince of Peace is He: the Father of Eternity! Both the Kingdom-Age and Eternity does He bring into being, for without Him there is possible neither Imperialism on earth nor Absolutism in heaven.

The new heavens and the new earth abide throughout all ages coming,* and they are

*Is. 65 : 17; 66 : 22; 2 Pet. 3 : 13; Rev. 21 : 1.

bound together in indissoluble bonds for ever and ever by the holy city that comes down from God. This permanency of the new heavens and the new earth is a fact not admitting of doubt or denial, because the fact is decisively settled by Scripture testimony, a testimony that is both clear and conclusive. Apart from such Scripture-based assurance, Eternity would be a word of indeterminate meaning; it would be all undefined and undefinable; altogether vague and bewildering.

But, a new earth, with every vestige of sin blotted out, banished, gone; a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness; a new earth, across whose everlasting hills the redeemed of all ages may literally walk together, nay, leap and sing, and be joyful under skies that are ever blithesome and bonnie; a new earth, established and upheld throughout endless generations by the unfailing strength of Jehovah-Jesus; a new earth, for ever and ever under the peerless and indefeasible scepter of God, and of the Lamb—all this, surely, is enough to create a conception so distinct and so definite, a conception so graphic and so clear, that it is hard to account for the bewildering uncertainty and obscure speculation into which so many have wandered when they have undertaken to predicate and to set forth the realities of this Eternity.

Our earth, then, the very scene of our sor-

rows, the very field of our struggles, is to be —as is to be the body of the believer—transfigured and glorified; is to be the Bethel, the oriel, the sacred trysting-place of the Lord and of His redeemed.

So all things now are tending to this blessed and Eternal Absolutism, this elucidation and consummation of all Prophecy. Leading the way is God Himself, and Him none can hinder. Wrought out are the Counsels of Eternity through and by the Lord Jesus Christ, and of these Counsels, as well as of the Universe of which He is the Creator and the Upholder, He is the one Life-Center. Apart from Him, and apart from the unfolding Counsels of God in Him, there can be no Imperialism at all. There is Imperialism, because there is—Christ!

All hope for the otherwise despairing world is inseparably bound up with the ultimate investiture of this Son of God with all glory and might and dominion and power. For Him is this world waiting, waiting unconsciously, but for Him waiting; waiting in its unrelieved sorrow, waiting in its falling tears, waiting in its accumulating dead!

Ere the Holy Volume is ended, Christ whispers one word to The Church, His Bride: it is a word of ineffable sweetness, a word of unspeakable comfort, a word of bewildering joy!—

SURELY I COME QUICKLY!

And to this last word there is an echo! Welling up from the heart of the Redeemed there is—there could be—but one response—the one unanswered prayer of all the ages:

AMEN. EVEN SO, COME, LORD JESUS!

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